

THE LAST WAR TRAIL



3500

12/92



"Teddy struck him a blow which sent him spinning over the ravine" (see page 40).

THE LAST WAR TRAIL

BY

EDWARD S. ELLIS

Author of "The Hunters of the Ozark," "The Camp in the Mountains,"
"A Hunt on Snow-shoes," "The Forest Messengers," etc. etc.

WITH A COLOUR FRONTISPIECE AND FOUR
BLACK-AND-WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS

TWENTY-FOURTH THOUSAND

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne

PS8459

L39

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00936004

CONTENTS

CHAPTER.	PAGE
I. "HE WAS TAUGHT TO RUN, TO JUMP, AND TO SHOOT HIS RIFLE,"	5
II. "HE SAW SEVERAL FAINT COLUMNS OF SMOKE,"	15
III. "THE WARRIOR LET FLY WITH THE SUDDENNESS OF LIGHTNING,"	28
IV. "QUICK, TERRY! RUN! THEY'RE AFTER YOU,"	37
V. "THEY LAY FLAT ON THEIR FACES LIKE A COUPLE OF SHARPSHOOTERS,"	47
VI. "IT'S DEERFOOT, THE SHAWANOE!"	57
VII. "THEY SAW A WONDERFUL SIGHT,"	68
VIII. "GO IN PEACE,"	79
IX. "AND IT WAS DONE,"	92
X. "I SURRENDER!"	99
XI. "YOU SHOULD SMILE THROUGH YOUR TEARS."	112
XII. "WE SHALL SOON KNOW THE TRUTH,"	122
XIII. "WHERE IS HE?"	130
XIV. "WHAT, THEN, SHALL BE DONE?"	138
XV. "SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG,"	150
XVI. "HIS SIGNAL WAS HEARD A MOMENT LATER,"	158
XVII. "COME, BOYS, I'M READY,"	168
XVIII. "IT IS GAUMA!"	178
XIX. "NOW HE IS CONQUERED,"	187
XX. "MY BROTHER, THERE IS HOPE,"	197
XXI. "IT WAS NOT DEERFOOT,"	206
XXII. "HE IS WAITING TO SEE SOME ONE,"	215
XXIII. "THEY ARE NOT INDIANS,"	223

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
XXIV. "OFF WITH YOU: GOOD-BY,"	234
XXV. "A THIRD PARTY ARRIVED ON THE SCENE,"	244
XXVI. "HE WILL SHOW THE SERPENT THE RIGHT WAY,"	253
XXVII. "THE SERPENT HIMSELF QUIETLY WALKED FORTH FROM THE WOOD,"	264
XXVIII. "THE SERPENT HAD SCORED HIS FIRST POINT,"	273
XXIX. "EDITH WAS SURE SHE DISTINGUISHED THE FAINT OUTLINES OF AN INDIAN WARRIOR,"	283
XXX. "THEY'LL GIVE THE SERPENT AN ESCORT,"	293
XXXI. "HE SAW A WARRIOR EMERGE FROM THE GLOOM,"	303
XXXII. "HE PLAYED HIS PART WELL,"	313
XXXIII. ONE-TWO-THREE—ALL OF THEM,	323
XXXIV. "ROLLING THUNDER DECIDED ON A PLAN WHICH WAS IN ACCORD WITH HIS VENOMOUS NA- TURE,	333
XXXV. "HE CAN CHANGE ALL HEARTS,"	341
XXXVI. "ALAS, HE WAS RIGHT,"	351
XXXVII. "HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL,"	359
XXXVIII. "DEERFOOT DIES FOR THE WHITE MAN,"	370

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"TERRY STRUCK HIM A BLOW WHICH SENT HIM SPINNING OVER THE RAVINE,"	Frontispiece
"KEEP ONE EYE SHUT—AIM STRAIGHT—THEN FIRE,"	FACING PAGE 16
"THAT WAS TORN FROM THE DRESS OF MOLLY,"	170
"HE WILL SHOW THE SERPENT THE RIGHT WAY,"	262
"THEY ARE COMING—ONE-TWO-THREE, ALL OF THEM,"	332

THE LAST WAR TRAIL

CHAPTER I.

"HE WAS TAUGHT TO RUN, TO JUMP, AND TO
SHOOT HIS RIFLE."

NOW, I have a secret which I wish to tell my young friends in this the first chapter of "THE LAST WAR TRAIL." I believe it is the rule among story-writers that such matters are to be held back until the close of the narrative. In one respect I am following that rule, for the little secret about which I dropped a hint here and there among the "Young Pioneer Series," "Log-Cabin Series," and the two volumes of this series, has been reserved for the last in which the name of Deerfoot the Shawanoe will ever be mentioned.

You who have done me the honor of reading

the books I have named, will call to mind that Deerfoot now and then went off on mysterious journeys beyond the Mississippi. Weeks and months passed, during which his friends neither saw nor heard any thing of him. When he was questioned as to the cause of his absence he gave unsatisfactory answers. Those who were his friends respected him enough to refrain from pressing him closely, aware also, as they must have been, that it was useless to do so.

Well, to shorten the story, Deerfoot was in love, and his journeys were made with the purpose of wooing the dusky maiden who had already taken his heart captive. I am sorry to confess that with all the pains that I have used, I have never been able to get any particulars about the wife of this extraordinary young Shawanoe warrior. That she was a member of another tribe was unquestionable, since the Shawanoes at that time lived east of the Mississippi, while her home was many miles westward of the Father of Waters.

As the story of "The Last War Trail" progresses, I shall have something to tell you

about Reverend Elijah Griffiths, a Moravian missionary, well known along a certain portion of the western frontier a hundred years ago. He was a good man who could fight Indians, swing an ax, shoot off-hand, outrun most of his fellow pioneers, and yet, beside the sick or dying bed, he was as gentle and sympathetic as a mother with her first-born child.

Between this Moravian and Leerfoot existed a peculiarly tender love. The missionary was unusually well-educated, and he was as delighted to impart instruction to the youthful Shawanoe as the latter was to receive it. They spent many sweet hours together, and one of the pleasantest memories of the good man who lived to be nearly five-score years old was of a certain radiant morning in spring, when Deerfoot escorted a blushing young maiden to the post where the minister was located for a time, and asked him to make them man and wife.

In the presence of the garrison the Moravian united the handsome couple in wedlock. It was the verdict of all that they were

the most prepossessing bride and groom they had ever seen.

After that the Moravian, on the urgent request of Deerfoot, became a frequent visitor to his humble cabin which he had built in the wilderness, far removed from all other habitations. Some of the most delightful hours of the good man's life were those spent in that home, in converse with Deerfoot and his wife, who was well fitted to be the companion of such a gifted person.

When the couple were married, the Shawanoe gave the name of his bride as Naomi—evidently one which they had adopted beforehand and which the Shawanoe had taken from his Bible.

Having told you this much there is really little, if any thing more, to relate about this remarkable young woman. The missionary was as familiar as any person living at that time with the Indian nationalities of the west, and he made many attempts to penetrate the mystery of Naomi's life, but was never able to do so. His sense of propriety would not permit him to urge the question to which no doubt he

could have obtained an answer, and the information, therefore, never came to him.

An old gentleman who died a few years ago in St. Louis, and who remembered the Moravian well, told me that he had heard him say that he believed Naomi, the wife of Deerfoot, belonged to the tribe of Indians known as the Sauks, whose hunting-grounds lay in the direction of his secret journeys. He believed further, that she had been cast out by her people for loving the young Shawanoe that had done so much for the pale-faces as against his own race.

This theory would account for the reserve of the couple in referring to the past of the wife, and since it fitted many other facts of their lives, and since also the Moravian must have observed something in the young woman herself to confirm this theory, I propose, if you are willing, that we accept his explanation as the true one.

Going back a number of years in the history of Deerfoot, you will recall that in his early youth he was one of the fiercest of the Shawanoes in his hatred of the white race; but,

while yet a boy, he was converted to Christianity, and, like Saul of Tarsus, he became bold and aggressive in combating the errors he had formerly proclaimed.

The belief of Deerfoot was that the Great Spirit had laid out a special work for him. He meant that his gifts in the way of fleetness of foot, quickness, skill in using the bow and arrow, and rifle, and his consummate woodcraft, should be used for the good of the people that had broken to him the Bread of Life. You will bear in mind that the achievements of the youth of which I have already told you were in that line, and never would have enlisted his support except for his gratitude to those whom he served.

For years, as you well know, Deerfoot gave himself to this work. It often, too, took him away from home for long periods during which Naomi was left alone; but she did not mind that, as she was skillful in the use of the rifle, and, like her husband, she believed that he was doing the will of the Great Spirit.

Then there came delightful weeks and months during which Deerfoot was never beyond call

of Naomi. He and his wife often hunted in company, and, in the exuberance of their bounding health they enjoyed life to overflowing.

After a time Deerfoot changed his home for one much nearer to the settlement of Greville. A little boy had come to brighten the hearts of the father and mother, and he wished to be more convenient to his friends in case their help should be needed for either the mother or child.

Unto this little fellow who was the picture of his father was given the name of Paul. There was no human character that Deerfoot revered so highly as that of the immortal apostle whose imprint on the thoughts and hearts of men was next to that of the Saviour Himself. He never tired of reading or talking about him, and so it was not at all strange that his first-born should be named for the marvelous man of the New Testament.

Deerfoot married young, but no happier husband ever lived. You must bear in mind that all the incidents of "The Last War Trail" took place fully four years after those of

which I told you in "The Hunters of the Ozark," and "The Camp in the Mountains." Deerfoot, therefore, had been a full-grown warrior for a good while, and his boy was about four years of age.

The little fellow, even that early in life, showed a remarkable resemblance to his father both in mind and feature. Of course there were the same jet-black eyes and hair, supplemented by the beautifully oval face, the small white, even teeth, the slightly Roman nose, the small hands and feet and perfectly symmetrical figure.

Even that early, Paul knew every letter of the alphabet and could repeat the principal Bible stories. Night and morning he folded his tiny hands at his mother's knee, murmured the sweet prayer of childhood, his faith in the goodness and all-protecting care of his Heavenly Father being as full and unquestioning as was that of his parents.

But, as you may suppose, the out-door training of the lad was not forgotten. Young as he was, he was taught to run, to jump, and to shoot his rifle, so that his experience in that

respect was all that it could possibly be in one so young.

You know, of course, that the guns of our ancestors were much more clumsy affairs than those of to-day. Let me describe a Kentucky squirrel rifle: The barrel was some forty inches long, a third greater than the sporting rifle of to-day, and there was enough metal in it to make a fair-sized crow-bar. The stock ran the whole length of the barrel and there was a brass box in the butt for matches.

To shoot off-hand with one of those guns was a task for a strong man. When he couldn't find a sapling or log to be used as a support, he would sometimes take out the hickory ramrod which he had whittled into shape himself, and hold it in his left hand with one end against his hip so as to make a brace to support the weight of the gun and steady his aim.

Now, the rifle used by Deerfoot was not so cumbersome that he had to resort to this means, but I am sure it would have been a burden for you had you been called to use such a weapon.

You can understand, therefore, that although he had managed to secure a smaller gun than usual for his son, yet it was altogether too heavy for one of his years to use without artificial support.

CHAPTER II.

"HE SAW SEVERAL FAINT COLUMNS OF SMOKE."

I DESIRE to introduce you to a pleasing scene on a certain beautiful morning in early spring. The forest was clothed in the wealth and glory of exuberant vegetation ; a delicate perfume was everywhere in the air ; the woods were vocal with the songs of the sweet-throated birds ; the air was so luminous with sunshine and light and life, that there was bliss in simple existence itself. Had you lain beneath the wild roses, looking upward at the fleecy clouds drifting through the upper sea of azure, you would have inhaled the delicious odor of flowers, and heard the low humming of bees as they loaded themselves with sweetness and sped away toward their homes like bullets fired from the hunters' rifles.

Just within sight of the small cabin, made

of logs, rocks and stones, and covered with climbing flowers and vines, stood Deerfoot and his little boy, Paul. The latter was dressed almost the same as his parent and was looking up with much interest as he arranged his rifle for him to shoot. The youngster with some help had been able to load the weapon and the father was examining the pan and flint to learn whether they were ready to fire.

All appeared to be right and Deerfoot pointed to a beech about a hundred yards away, its white trunk showing in patches through the green vegetation.

"Does my son see the mark?" asked Deerfoot, speaking more directly to his child than he was accustomed to do when addressing other persons.

The boy glanced about in his quick, bright way and replied in an infantile voice:

"I see a round place that you marked with your hunting-knife: is that what you mean?"

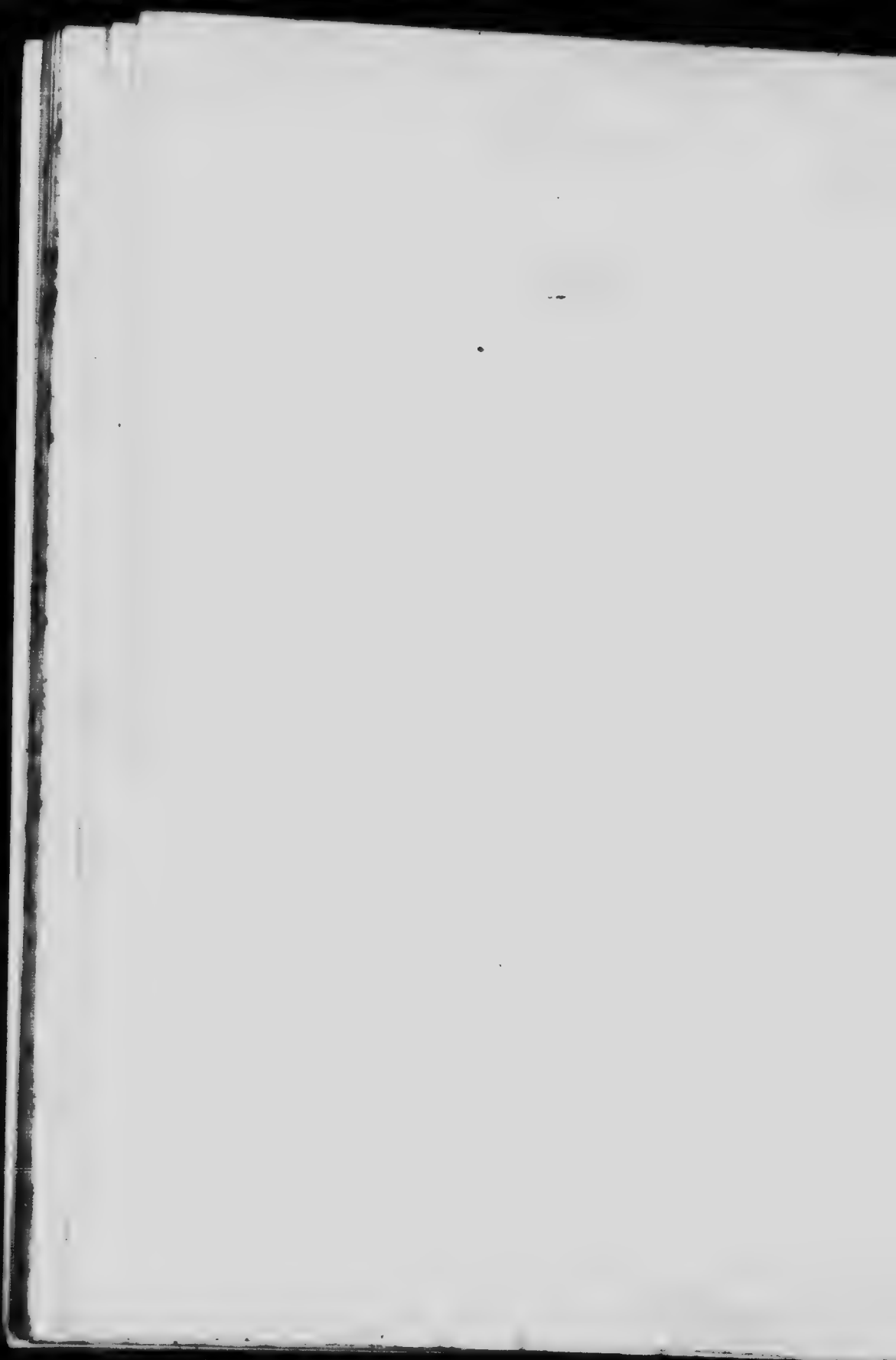
"That is the mark: now, are you going to hit it right in the center?"

"I am going to *try*," replied Paul, reaching up for the rifle.



"Keep one eye shut—aim straight—then fire."

(Page 17.)



"HE SAW SEVERAL COLUMNS OF SMOKE." 17

"That is all any one can do; kneel down and I will fix the gun for you to shoot."

The little dusky-faced lad knelt beside the log on which Deerfoot rested the gun ready for aiming and firing. The spring of the latter was too rigid for the strength of the youngster, who had tried in vain more than once to draw the hammer back.

Then the proud and happy father withdrew a pace or two and watched him as he sighted the piece. The lad was deliberate and careful, as he had been told to be, and when the click of the flint was heard, followed by the flash and hiss of the powder in the pan, the Shawanoe saw a white spot appear just above the ring he had marked on the side of the beech.

"How did I make out, papa?" asked Paul, raising his head without shifting his position, and peering at the target.

"Pretty well; you struck a little above the ring, but such a shot would have brought down a bear or deer. Now we'll try it again."

The boy helped in reloading the weapon, and a few minutes later took his place as before.

"Let your father see what *he* can do," said the warrior before the lad was quite ready.

"I know well enough what *you* can do," said he, looking up at him with his trusting smile.

"What can I do?" asked his parent, gazing down upon him with the same affectionate expression.

"You *couldn't* miss if you tried."

"Oh, yes, I could," replied Deerfoot, throwing back his head and laughing merrily and silently.

"No, you can't," persisted Paul; "let's see you try."

"Very well; here goes!"

The gun which had never failed the Shaw-
anoe was brought to a level and fired so quickly
that the owner seemed hardly to take time to
do more than glance along the barrel.

"There! what did I tell you?" exclaimed Paul, clapping his hands with delight.

In the very center of the circle gleamed a white spot, which showed that the bullet of Deerfoot had hit the bull's-eye. He affected to be amazed and stared at the tree and then

"HE SAW SEVERAL COLUMNS OF SMOKE." 19

at his gun as though he did not know how it came about.

"Well, that *was* strange," added the father, proceeding to reload his weapon, "but I guess we'll make this bargain: *You'll* do all the missing and *I'll* do the hitting: what do you say?"

"It kind of looks that way," replied Paul, kneeling down and preparing for another trial. The fond father was hopeful, for he understood his child well enough to know that he was determined to succeed, if possible.

So after the parent had again drawn back the hammer he watched the little fellow with the keenest interest.

"Ah, you have missed!" he called out, when the gun was fired, and not the slightest abrasion was added to the mark already on the trunk of the beech.

"No; I haven't," persisted the lad, dropping the gun and starting on a run toward the tree, his parent close behind him.

Deerfoot was quite sure his boy had failed, but saw the possibility that he had not. But

surely there was no indication that the bullet had touched the broad, gray trunk.

"Show me where you hit the tree," said the father, looking down at the base and among the limbs as though searching for some trace of the lead.

"I hit it right where *you* did," was the sturdy response of little Paul; "now look and see if I didn't."

Believing it hardly possible that his child was right, Deerfoot took out his hunting-knife and began gouging the sappy wood where his own bullet was imbedded. He had not to dig long before the point of the weapon pried out a twisted ball.

"*That's mine!*" exclaimed Paul.

"Don't be too sure," replied the father, still gouging and cutting with the point of his knife.

Lo and behold!

A second bullet was brought to light. The boy was right: the first was fired by him.

"There! there! what did I tell you?" called out the happy youngster, clapping his hands again and dancing like a little elf while his

tiny moccasins kicked the leaves hither and thither.

Setting down his gun Deerfoot seized his boy and flung him a dozen feet in the air. The chubby fellow went end over end, but when caught by the unerring arms of his father, he was right side up, and his velvety cheek was pressed against the equally smooth cheek of the parent, who kissed him again and again, tossed him aloft, held him out at arm's-length and acted just the same as you have seen circus performers do.

Paul laughed and shouted with delight, for it was the finest sport in the world when his father frolicked with him in that fashion. I could not tell you a quarter of the performances of the couple, which brought a smile to the face of the mother as she stood in front of the cabin with glowing face and kindling eye, watching those whom she loved far more than her own life.

Then, as each caught up his own gun, they started on a race for the cabin. It was neck and neck most of the way, but the parent was beginning to draw a little in front when unfortu-

nately he caught his moccasin in some obstruction and rolled heels over head. Before he could scramble to his feet and recover his pace the laughing Paul had won the race.

Deerfoot seemed to be much crest-fallen over his defeat and complained that when one of the contestants stumbled, the other ought to stop and help him up instead of doing his best to beat him.

"I fell the other day," replied Paul, "and *you* didn't help *me* up, but run right on and beat me and then said I ought to be ashamed to tumble down like that."

"And so you should," insisted the other, "for you are a little bit of a fellow that ought to be able to keep his feet without trouble."

"Well, *you're* big enough to have learned that long ago: I'll leave it to mother whether I didn't beat you fair."

"She'll take *your* part of course," said Deerfoot, looking as though he had no friend in the world.

"If Deerfoot doesn't know enough to run without falling," said the mother, glancing slyly at her husband, whose acting was clear to

"HE SAW SEVERAL COLUMNS OF SMOKE." 23

her from the first, "he ought to be beaten by every body."

Bending over, Naomi reached out her hands, and, dropping his small rifle, the youngster made one bound, his arms closing about her neck at the same moment that she pressed him to her breast and began showering kisses upon him.

The heart of Deerfoot the Shawanoe swelled with gratitude to the Great Spirit when he looked upon the scene. His whole heart went out in love to his wife and little boy. No one could have viewed the family without being touched almost to tears.

You have heard enough of Deerfoot to require little to be told you about him, and you hardly need to be reminded that Naomi was a worthy companion of the youthful warrior. She was as devout as he, and, night and morning, as I have told you, Paul knelt at her knee and prayed to Him about whom his father and mother told him such wonderfully beautiful truths.

All three preferred to live by themselves in the woods. Being Indians it was natural that

such should be their taste, but you may think that since they embraced Christianity they would have been inclined to seek the society of civilized persons.

You may recall that when a boy, Deerfoot became a follower of the meek and lowly One, and tried to live with the white people in the settlement, but he could not content himself within such restricted limits. Ever since that time he had roamed at will through the trackless forests and across river and prairie.

Believing that the Great Spirit had appointed him to do the work on which he had been engaged so long—that of serving the white race—Deerfoot intended to train up his young son in the same path, so that when he became a warrior the two could travel and work together, so that in time the son might succeed to his father.

It was a fine plan and a worthy ambition on the part of the Shawanoe, but alas, I have set out to tell you why it came to naught.

After romping and frolicking with both wife and son, the father left them for a brief time while he climbed to the top of an elevation,

not far off, to look over the surrounding country. It may be said that Deerfoot resembled an advanced sentinel in an enemy's territory.

Far to the left lay the village of Greville, (of which you heard something in "The Hunters of the Ozark," and "The Camp in the Mountains"). It looked charming in the radiance of this spring day, and the eyes of the Shawanoe rested on it for a long time, his heart softened by the reflection that every white person in the place was a friend of his. The cabins were fully two-score in number, and there was an air of thrift and comfort about the place which it lacked when you saw it, years before.

On this beautiful spring morning, Deerfoot's keen eyes discovered something which caused him disquiet and misgiving. Far to the right, miles away from the village, he saw several faint columns of smoke against the clear blue sky. They might have been mistaken for clouds even by experienced frontiersmen, but they did not deceive the Shawanoe.

He knew they came from the camp-fires of

Indians, and they indicated that a large party were not many miles away.

This was unusual, and therefore unexpected. For years only a few wandering Indians ventured near Greville, and there was not a settler who believed the place would ever again suffer from them, but here was the evidence too plain to be doubted that something was wrong.

The suspicion that came to the mind of Deerfoot was that the old enemy of the pioneers, Black Bear, had gathered his Winnebagoes together for a last and decisive raid upon the settlement. No doubt he had with him the strongest war party he had ever led so far from their hunting grounds, and unless the settlers were fully prepared themselves for the assault the result was likely to be disastrous.

Deerfoot went back to his home, where he spent most of the day with his wife and boy. He could not believe the peril to the settlement imminent, but he became uneasy toward

and decided to make his way to the village so as to be certain that his friends were not surprised.

So he disguised himself to some extent,

"HE SAW SEVERAL COLUMNS OF SMOKE." 27

kissed and embraced his little boy and his wife, and just as the day was closing, set out on an expedition which he believed would not keep him away from his beloved ones more than one or two days.

CHAPTER III.

**"THE WARRIOR LET FLY WITH THE SUDDEN-
NESS OF LIGHTNING."**

ON the morning succeeding the day wherein took place Deerfoot's contest with his little boy, our old friends, Terry Clark and Fred Linden, were standing on an elevation overlooking Greville, and gazing upon a scene stirring enough to quicken the pulses of a man of iron.

The little settlement, as I have told you, had increased to two-score buildings, besides a large structure near the middle of the place which was used as a school-house and church, and was intended in case of sudden emergency to answer the purpose of a block-house.

The years of quietness which followed the incidents described in "The Camp in the Mountains," naturally brought the belief that all danger from Indians was over. More of

the forest was cleared away and cultivated, vigilance was relaxed, and the thoughts of the pioneers turned to every subject except that of the red men.

At this juncture the danger came like a lightning-bolt from a summer sky. A horde of Winnebagoes swept down from the north-east, and threading their way through the many leagues of forest, reached the village unsuspected, until their yells rang through the wood and they burst like a cyclone across the clearing.

Our old friends Terry Clark and Fred Linden were off on one of their many hunts when the blow fell. During the preceding day, while tramping through the wilderness, they saw signs which caused them uneasiness. They came upon the embers of several camp-fires, and observed enough to know that a large party of red men were in the neighborhood. Alarmed for the safety of the settlement they had hastily turned their steps homeward; and now as they rounded a little rocky point and gained their first view of Greville they learned that their fears were more than realized.

Contrary to the usual custom of the aborigines, the war party had not made their attack on the settlement until the morning sun was in the sky.

There must have been fully a hundred Winnebagoes who had opened fire from every side of the clearing that gave them a chance to conceal their bodies. Dashing across the open space they had spread consternation for some minutes, until the pioneers began rallying, when the Indians fell back to cover and kept up the attack with their rifles.

The little puffs of smoke continually appeared at numberless points along the fringe of the woods, the dark figures of the yelling warriors occasionally showing themselves, and the bodies stretched here and there on the open ground proving that the assailants, despite the suddenness of their attack, had already paid no small price for their temerity.

Every pioneer's house contained one or more rifles, and there were but a few brief minutes of confused running to and fro, when men, women and children found shelter within some building or behind some strong breastwork.

Fred Linden scrambled over the rocks to a point which commanded a nearer view of the settlement, while Terry Clark stood as if spell-bound and gazed eagerly at the sight. The cheek of the sturdy youth grew pale as he watched the deadly combat that was in progress.

"Ah, why was not Frid and mesilf in time to reach home last night, that we might have given the folks warning?" was the lamentation that came to his lips; "it's mesilf that's afeard they've done harrum to me own people, and my heart will be sorry till I know whither the same is the thruth or not."

The Irish lad was not to be permitted to play the part of spectator, nor, indeed, was he given time to make his surveys as thorough as he wished. The crack of a rifle, the whiz of a bullet before his face, and the whoop of an Indian, seemed to come almost simultaneously from a point a short distance to his right.

Terry whirled about just in time to find himself confronted by a fierce warrior who was bounding toward him with upraised tomahawk. He must have felt sure that the shot just fired had hurt the white youth so severely

that he was unable to offer much resistance, or he would not have taken the risk of attacking a Long Knife who owned, and at that moment held possession of, one of the best of rifles.

Observing that the youth kept his feet and showed a bold front the warrior stopped short and, bringing his weapon back over his shoulder, let fly with the suddenness of lightning straight at the head of the brave Terry, who did not budge or turn away.

The result was singular. The tomahawk struck the side of the rifle-barrel near the muzzle, ground out several splinters of fire, and was deflected just enough from its course to glance harmlessly by, bounding end over end among the rocks beyond.

At the instant of impact, Terry Clark pulled the trigger of his gun, but the blow of the hatchet swerved the weapon enough to send the bullet whizzing over the shoulder of the Winnebago.

During the seconds in which Terry was gazing along the leveled rifle he identified the redskin as an old acquaintance. He was the

ugliest warrior on whom he had ever looked, his nose being so distorted and awry from some wound received years before, that it bore little resemblance to that organ, which ought always to be an ornament to the human countenance.

"Begorrah, but it's Ap-to-to!" muttered the youth, the moment he saw that his shot had done no execution; "it's a good time for the spalpeen and mesilf to settle accounts."

You will recall, in the story of "The Camp in the Mountains," that a Winnebago warrior to whom the trappers had shown great kindness proved an ingrate and did all he could to bring about the death of those that had used him so well. But for the subtlety of Deerfoot the Shawanoe, he would have succeeded.

Here was the dusky miscreant again, eager as ever to commit murder. But the combative boy of fifteen was now a young man, active, powerful, and not afraid to assail any one living.

It is not to be supposed that the treacherous Winnebago recognized the youth as one of the little party which had such a narrow escape

from Black Bear and his warriors, though the recognition on the other side was easy. But the long experience and training of Ap-to-to led him to seize every advantage without delay.

Understanding the slip that had taken place, and observing that the youth was unharmed, the warrior whipped out his hunting-knife and bounded toward him. It would have been natural for Terry to club his rifle and meet his assailant with a swinging blow: but an agile savage can sometimes dodge such a stroke which of necessity can not be as quickly delivered as a shorter one, and after all perhaps Terry showed his wisdom by flinging his gun to the ground and putting himself in a position of defense in which his naked fists were the only weapons to be used.

Terry's pose was one that would have been commended by the most scientific pugilists of the present day. The left foot rested on the ground a short distance in front of the right, the weight of the body being so evenly balanced that it was easy to leap backward or forward as necessity might require. The shoul-

ders were well up and back, the left fist clenched and extended, while the other was crossed just in front of the chest. The right arm was to be used for parrying, while the left was to shoot forward like the flash of a piston rod, the instant an opening presented itself.

But Terry was dealing with a more skillful enemy than he suspected. Instead of rushing forward with upraised knife and catching a rattling blow from the waiting fist, the red man stopped short and began slowly circling round his antagonist, with his knife tightly clenched, while he, too, was evidently on the watch for a chance to deal a mortal stroke.

But Terry was not to be deceived nor denied. He slowly retreated, inch by inch, until he had drawn Ap-to-to forward, when he made a sudden leap, and shot out his left hand with all the strength and quickness of which he was master.

Had the fist landed on the head of the red-skin it must have stunned him, but with a dexterity that was not expected, the Winnebago ducked, and the fist shot over his shoulder, grazing his ear in its passage.

At again Terry Clark displayed his clever science. While the Indian was quick enough to save himself from the crashing blow, he had no thought of the sudden peril to which his avoidance exposed him, and he therefore took no means of escaping it.

Without drawing back the left hand, which glanced past Ap-to-to's ear, Terry whirled his arm to the left, wrapped it about the neck of the warrior, and closing his arm against his own side, held the head of the Indian bent forward and imprisoned as if in a vise.

In other words, Terry Clark had the head of Mr. Ap-to-to in what is known as "chancery."

CHAPTER IV.

"QUICK, TERRY! RUN! THEY'RE AFTER YOU!"

A PUGILIST caught "in chancery" is in an awkward position. His head is imprisoned under the arm of his antagonist, whose other hand is free to deliver fearful punishment.

Science has indicated the means by which a person caught at such dreadful disadvantages may save himself, but the particular Winnebago now under consideration had received no instruction in the method and he could not call it into play.

Not only was he unable thus to free himself but, as it proved, there was no need of his doing so. Terry had hardly got his man where he wanted him when he discovered to his dismay that despite all his efforts to prevent it the Indian was slipping from his grasp.

The youth tightened his grip around the coppery neck until it seemed impossible for

the Winnebago to breathe, but, all the same, he slowly squirmed away, just as an eel will do, no matter how tightly you may close your hand around its body.

The youth's nostrils soon disclosed the reason: Ap-to-to had daubed the exposed parts of his body with some kind of rank-smelling grease.

"Ye cowardly blackguard," muttered the Irish youth, stooping lower and seizing the body of the savage with the intention of flinging him over his head. He would have done so, at the risk of the red man's neck, but for that odoriferous unguent which once more saved Ap-to-to.

The latter slipped from the grasp of his antagonist, having dropped his knife during the first moment of the flurry (else, as you may be sure, he would have called it into play), and then bounded again at Terry Clark.

The latter was so unprepared that he had not time to gather himself for the proper blow with which to meet such a rush. Ap-to-to proved he was not without nerve in thus seizing his antagonist around the waist, and striv-

ing to drag and throw him over the rocks but a few steps away.

Once again it would have been an easy matter for Terry to vanquish his foe, but for the slippery state of his body. The Irish lad had learned a good deal of the art of wrestling since the time, four years before, when Deerfoot and Fred Linden were able to lay him on his back.

There was a fierce struggle for a few seconds only, when down went the couple, with the youth on top. Ap-to-to strove desperately to turn his foe and writhe from beneath him, but he was held immovable until the exasperating grease which had got on the hands of Terry, allowed the other to work himself partly free. Quickly releasing his right hand the youth clutched some dirt and gravel so as to enable him to hold fast.

The single instant thus employed allowed the agile redskin to free himself and to leap to his feet. But Terry seized him again and the two struggled with greater fierceness than before, both edging toward the chasm which was fully twenty feet deep, for each was

confident of his ability to fling the other over.

It was an even thing until the edge was reached, where the Winnebago nerved himself for the supreme effort. The two were fighting with only the weapons furnished by nature, and but for the greased body of the Indian he would have speedily succumbed before the powerful and more scientific onslaught of the other. Terry, however, was exasperated by the manner in which he was continually baffled.

It was at this juncture, when the issue looked so doubtful, that Terry Clark brought it to a close by a single act.

With a cleverness that did him credit he worked Ap-to-to around so that the Indian stood between himself and the chasm. Then, freeing himself for an instant from his grasp, he struck him a blow on the frontispiece that fell like the stroke of a battering ram. The Winnebago was not only knocked clean off his feet, but sent spinning fully two yards out over the ravine, down which he sped like a meteor.

Terry stepped to the margin and looked over. He saw him strike the bottom with a force that ought to have disabled him, though it was doubtful whether he was hurt at all.

"It's meself that is thinkin'," said Terry, "that ye've had a slight jar, as me cousin said whin—"

"Quick, Terry ! Run ! they're after you !"

It was Fred Linden who shouted the startling words from a point no more than a hundred yards off, and a slight distance below the startled Irish youth. The latter glanced toward his friend and saw him making excited gestures, and he needed no one to tell him that Fred had the best of reasons for doing so.

Terry saw nothing of the Indians against whom he was warned, but the motions of his friend indicated the direction from which the danger threatened. Less fleet of foot than his companion, and well aware that almost any Indian could readily overtake him, Terry lost no time in fleeing from the perilous spot.

Before he had taken a score of steps he recalled that his rifle was still lying on the ground, but a short distance behind him.

"Begorra, but there's no use of savin' meself if I have to lave that jewel behind."

And with the sturdy stubbornness which was a part of his nature, he turned about and ran for his gun, whose polished stock was seen gleaming in the sunlight where he had flung it before engaging in his wrestling bout with the Winnebago.

It looked as if this delay, slight as it was, scattered all hope for Terry; for, as he straightened up, with his weapon in hand, several whoops apprised him that he was discovered, and his enemies were almost upon him.

There was no trouble now in seeing them. Three Winnebagoes in their war paint were coming up the ascent on their rapid, loping trot, and were already so close that any one could have dropped him with his gun; but it was evident that on that day the Indians favored the policy of taking prisoners whenever they saw a chance of doing so.

Terry Clark's flight was of necessity a blind one: he could do nothing but simply turn about and run from the red men; but as is

sometimes the case, it proved the best course possible.

The rocks, ravines and roughness of the surface prevented him making the moderate speed of which he would have been capable under more favoring circumstances, and he had run but a short distance when he found himself picking his way along the very ravine over the edge of which he had driven Ap-to-to. But he was some distance from where the mishap had overtaken that individual, and he noticed that the depth of the chasm was but little more than half of what it was where he went down.

The fugitive had about time to form this idea when he personally verified it. A stone upon which he trod rolled under his foot, and before he could recover himself, over he went.

Terry dropped on his feet, and, though considerably jarred, was not injured. Cool headed as he generally was in danger, he paused long enough to glance around and take his bearings, with a view of deciding, if possible, the best course—if there was any—to follow.

The ravine had a varying width of from

twenty to fifty feet, with perpendicular sides to a height ranging from a dozen to three times as many feet. Fortunately for Terry he had fallen at one of the shallowest portions of the gorge. The latter wound around and in and out, its appearance indicating that a large stream of water had once flowed through it, and that during certain seasons it became the outlet for the overcharged fountains of the same element.

The youth could not see that it made any difference which direction he took, for he was as likely to confront his enemies from one point as from another. Fearing to meet Ap-to-to he turned the opposite way.

Since the three Winnebagoes from whom he was trying to escape were on his right, he kept as close as he could to the rocks on that side, so as to prevent them firing down upon him. It was well he took this precaution, for his pursuers were striving to get the chance to do that very thing, since it looked as if there was little hope of making him prisoner.

The foremost of the Winnebagoes ran close to the upper edge of the ravine, gun in hand

and peeping over at the fugitive who was stealing rapidly forward, watched the first chance of sending a bullet after him.

Behind this warrior trotted the other two at varying distances ; but they made no effort to gain a shot. Apparently they believed their leader was sure of his game and they had no wish to interfere in his sport.

The Winnebago in front cut a singular figure as he trotted so close to the edge of the ravine that he seemed in danger of falling over. He held his rifle cocked and grasped with both hands so as to raise and fire it the instant he saw his chance. His task was a hard one, for he was compelled to keep so near that despite his dexterity, he narrowly saved his footing more than once by a mere hair's-breadth.

It was odd to see him suddenly bring his gun half way to his shoulder as he slackened his gait, without entirely stopping, and then, before he could make his aim sure, lower the weapon again. The glimpses of the fugitive were too fleeting to warrant him in risking a shot.

Had Terry kept further out in the ravine it

would have been the easiest thing in the world to pick him off. More than likely the Winnebago expected him to make some such move and was holding his fire for the opportunity.

All at once, the fugitive committed the very blunder for which his enemy was waiting. A boulder suddenly confronted him, and instead of climbing over the obstruction he turned further out into the ravine so as to pass around it.

The watchful Winnebago stopped short, brought his gun to a level, and sighted at the youth, who was all unconscious of his peril. The finger was pressing the trigger when the dusky marksman, leaning far over the chasm, took a header, like a boy from his bicycle, and plunged to the bottom as dead as Julius Cæsar.

CHAPTER V.

"THEY LAY FLAT ON THEIR FACES LIKE A
COUPLE OF SHARPSHOOTERS."

NOW, I do not wish to mystify you about this plunge which the Winnebago took to the bottom of the chasm. You understand, of course, that it was altogether involuntary on his part, the inciting cause being a bullet which arrived from the other side of the ravine, fired thence by one of the finest athletes that could be found along the Western frontier, and his name was, as you will be pleased to know, Frederick Linden.

He was a lad of sixteen when you last read about him; now he was a young man of twenty, being one year older than his friend Terry Clark. The two were dressed in a fashion similar to that which I have already described for a hundred years ago and less, there being little difference between the attire of the parents and their children.

After warning Terry of his danger Fred supposed that he would lose no time in hurrying from the spot, but the return of the fugitive for his gun so disarranged matters that during a few precious minutes the elder lost track, so to speak, of the other. Fred had sought a place where he believed they could make a safe defense, for a while at least, and he expected that Terry would lose no time in following him thither.

Furthermore, Fred thought that his shoutings and signals to his friend had given him such instructions that he would be sure to do as told ; but no doubt in the excitement of the occasion Fred was not as explicit as he supposed. When, therefore, he looked for his comrade and saw him not, he became alarmed and ran forth to meet him. His arrival was so opportune that he was able to fire the shot that saved the life of Terry from the Winnebago.

But it must be borne in mind that in doing this Fred Linden plaed his own life in great danger. The smitten warrior had two companions fully armed, on the war path, and but

a few paces behind him. They were looking for scalps, and there was none more tempting just then than that of the youth who had tumbled their leader to the bottom of the gorge.

Fred Linden needed no reminder of this fact, for the smoke had not yet fully lifted from the muzzle of his rifle when he darted back behind the rock from which he had stepped to make his aim sure. As he did so he began reloading his weapon, for he was likely to need it within a few seconds, and the cardinal rule on the frontier is always to reload without delay.

Meanwhile Terry Clark was engaged in precisely the same proceeding. He had heard the thump of the body behind him, following directly on the rifle crack, and the death-shriek of the redskin, and he was quick enough to read their meaning at once.

"Be the powers," muttered the awed youth, turning half way round and staring at the impressive sight, "from the way the spalpeens are divin' over the rocks, they must be thinking that the gorge is full of water and they are
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in bad nade of a bath, which mesilf is the last one to dispoot."

Even in that stirring crisis Terry was on the point of running to pick up the rifle of the Winnebago, when he observed that it had rebounded from his hand and struck the rocks with such force that it was badly shattered.

Then, as if recalling his own peril, he whisked back to the side of the ravine, where he stood as close as he could against the rocks, while he hurriedly reloaded his gun. That done, he was unable to decide the best thing to do, if indeed he could do any thing at all.

The most desirable course, as it seemed to him, was that he and Fred should come together, for they were at an almost fatal disadvantage so long as they were apart; but just how the union was to be effected was more than the lad could tell.

If he ventured away from the rocks he would expose himself to a shot from the Indians who had been chasing him. Doubtless there were many places along the ravine where the height of the walls as well as their configuration permitted him to climb to the

top; but whether that favorable point was near or far, or whether it was on the right or left of the ravine, could be learned only by examination.

But it was not to be supposed that the two warriors above would patiently await his reappearance. The fight at Greville was at its height and stirring events were following each other too closely for them to idle their time. It might be set down as certain that the youth would hear from them very soon.

"They'll be after me," thought Terry, "and they won't fool away many minutes in doing it. This ain't the best place in the world to bate off the attack of a dozen of the spalpeens, and I must find a better spot where I can do meself justice, as me grandfather used to obsarve after crackin' all the heads within raich at Donnybrook."

He began stealing along the ravine, keeping close to the rocks, and fortunately had not gone far when he discovered a place which, if not absolutely safe, was much more favorable than the spot where he had been standing.

At some time in the past a bowlder weigh-

ing a dozen tons or so had been loosened from the side of the gorge and had pitched forward half a dozen feet, leaving a cavity in the flinty wall large enough to shelter a half dozen men. Crouching behind the boulder a person was screened from any shots fired from above and on the same side of the ravine. Terry considered it a providential refuge, of which he lost no time in taking advantage.

The two Winnebagoes who saw their leader take his plunge into the ravine were quick to read the cause, and Fred Linden was not a moment too soon in dodging behind the rock, where he reloaded his gun. He heard the ping of the bullet which was sent after him, as it glanced along the side of the stone close enough to his head to cause him to start and mutter :

"That could not have come any nearer without hitting me."

But, as you well know, the young man had been trained in the woods from infancy, and he conducted himself with the coolness of a veteran. Peering around the edge of the rock just far enough to gain a view of the two war-

rriors he carefully sighted at one of them. At that moment the two were standing in plain sight, and the distance was so short that he could hardly fail to bring down his man.

Before he could perfect his aim, however, the Winnebagoes awoke to the fact that they were not dealing with a child. They dropped so simultaneously that it looked as if the same cannon ball had taken away the legs of both. They lay flat on their faces like a couple of sharp-shooters, and with their guns extended along the ground in front, watched for a chance to pick off the young man who had just made such a fatal display of his marksmanship.

Fred could see both, but it will be understood that the view was so slight that it seemed hardly worth while to risk a shot. Nevertheless, he tried it, sending the bullet skipping along the earth almost in the eyes of the warrior who was stretched a few feet to the right of his companion.

The Indian was not three seconds later in returning the shot, which came equally near the crouching youth. Evidently all concerned were

excellent marksmen, and it would not do for either party to hold the other too cheaply.

Fred kept his body entirely shut out from sight while reloading his gun, but the moment he drew back the flint he looked from behind his shelter in search of another chance to try his skill.

The first glance puzzled him, and then he smiled in spite of himself. Each warrior had placed an irregular stone no larger than his head in front of him, just as soldiers in battle avail themselves of any object, no matter how slight, which will screen a small part of their body from the whistling bullets.

From behind these stones the Winnebagoes pushed out their guns on the alert for an opening. Guarded as were the movements of Fred Linden, he saw that when he gently thrust the muzzle of his rifle around the corner of the rock, the others discovered him. One of the results of this discovery was not without its humorous feature.

The warrior on the left was so eager to pick off the youth that he disturbed the stone, which

seemed to have been delicately balanced in front of his face, and it rolled to the left. He grabbed it with one hand, and replaced it so hurriedly in position that it rolled to the other side. Snatching it up more spitefully than before, he adjusted it quickly, but with such skill that it kept its place.

The slight flurry, as you will understand, gave Fred Linden a good opportunity to reach the warrior, and sighting as best he could he fired. But the shot went wilder than any he had discharged in a long time, passing fully a foot above the head of the target.

The cause for this was that at the moment of pressing the trigger the youth could not restrain a sudden inclination to laugh over the efforts of the Winnebago to keep the sheltering stone in place. The slight, mirthful convulsion was enough to spoil the aim of the best marksman that ever contended at Creedmoor.

As before, Fred withdrew from all possibility of gaze while employed in ramming another charge home. Then, when he peered out, he failed to see any thing of his enemies. Suspecting some trick he did not dare to make a very

thorough scrutiny for some time, and even then he was a long while in reaching a conclusion. At last, however, the truth dawned upon him : both warriors had withdrawn.

CHAPTER VI.

"IT'S DEERFOOT, THE SHAWANOE!"

WHERE the two Winnebagoes had gone was the question which assumed immediate interest to Fred Linden. The duel between him and them, having opened and continued some time, was not likely to end by the withdrawal of the stronger party. The circumstances were such that there could be no doubt that the disappearance of the warriors was a move to outwit their enemy.

The theory of Linden was that they would make a cautious circuit, and entering the ravine at some favorable point, either cross and strive to get behind him, or make an attack upon Terry Clark.

Be the result either of these, or any thing else, Fred felt that he must lose no time in rejoining his friend. Never could it be said with greater truth that in union was strength.

Several quick glances failed to show any thing of the red men. Grasping his rifle in a trailing position and crouching low, the youth ran to the edge of the ravine and peered over. Just there the wall was too high for him to let himself down, but he saw a spot a short distance off where it could be done. He was hastening in that direction when Terry caught sight of him.

"Hallo, Frid, why are ye runnin' ? I'll not harm ye."

"Some one else will, though," replied his friend, who having reached the point where the wall was low, hastily let himself down with the aid of one hand. Dropping lightly on his feet he sped across the intervening space and the next minute grasped the hand of the Irish youth who was glad indeed to be joined by him.

"Is this your fort ?" asked Fred, surveying the bowlder.

"I didn't build the same, but it struck me that it was the best use to which it could be put, as me cousin remarked when he cracked the head of his grand-uncle."

"I can't say that I admire it," added Fred, whose late experience qualified him to speak as an expert on such questions; "it served to keep you out of reach of the Indians above you, and on this side of the ravine, and if you are careful it will shield you from any on the side from which I came; but it will be bad if a lot attack us from the right or left."

"Do ye mane that it'll be bad for *thim* or *us*?"

"Bad for us; don't you see that they will have a raking fire, and we shall be caught in a trap?"

"I'm afeard I shall have to agraa wid ye; but what shall we do?"

"Get out at once."

"Whither will we go?"

"I don't know that it makes any difference, but let's start to the left, because that takes us in the direction of home."

"By the sounds of the firin' and yelpin' it seems to me that that's the worst place we can be."

"Perhaps you are right, but come on."

During these hurried words both youths were using their eyes to the best of their ability. Neither up nor down the ravine could they catch any sign of an Indian, though that was no proof that a half-dozen of the miscreants had not their eyes upon them at that very moment. Fred was especially sure that they had not done with the two Winnebagoes with whom he had exchanged shots a few minutes before.

There was little choice, however, as to the best line of flight, and Terry followed his friend on a loping trot down the gorge.

A brief distance brought them in sight of the warrior whose life had paid the penalty of his attempt to shoot Terry Clark when fleeing down the ravine. It would seem that the boys had lived long enough on the frontier to become used to such scenes, for it was not the first or second time that they had taken part in similar affrays; but both turned their heads aside and quickened their pace until the sad sight was behind them.

Neither spoke, but their senses were on the alert. They knew they were in deadly peril.

Both felt that they could not get out of the dangerous gorge too soon.

And so, as they ran, they glanced from side to side, on the look-out for some place where they could readily climb out of the ravine.

"There it is—just beyonst, to your lift," said Terry, in an undertone.

"Yes—but it's too late!"

Terry saw that his companion spoke the truth, for coming up the incline of the gorge in front of them were five Winnebago warriors.

The party came in sight barely a hundred yards away. They would have been descried sooner but for the winding course of the ravine. Since they, as well as Terry and Fred, were on the watch, the enemies observed each other at the same moment.

In the case of the Winnebagoes the discovery was announced by a volley from their guns. Instead of replying, the youths darted aside. Fred to the right and Terry to the left, in quest of cover. The irregularity of the walls gave them sufficient shelter from their enemies, so long as they did not come any closer, but if

they should charge down the gorge, a hand to hand fight was sure to follow ; or by climbing to the ground above, they could dispose of our friends at their leisure.

The width of the ravine where this check took place was barely twenty yards, so that it can hardly be said that the boys were obliged to part company at all.

"Terry," said Fred, speaking no louder in the stillness than if he stood at his elbow : "it won't do for us to fire at the same moment."

"Ye are corric't," replied the other ; "and whin we do fire, it won't do for aither of us to miss."

Having delivered their volley the five Winnebagoes also fell apart, placing themselves as close to the walls of the ravine as they could without clogging their freedom of movement. They expected an immediate return fire, and it was natural that they should take advantage of this partial protection.

Our young friends showed a coolness and self-restraint creditable to them, in not emptying their guns at once on receiving the fire of their enemies. Had they done so, they would

have been practically defenseless for the moment, and the red men would have dashed forward and attacked them before they could be prepared.

There is a good deal of power in a leveled and loaded gun. One of the youths might discharge his rifle, but so long as the other held his ready to fire, the menace would probably hold the Winnebagoes in check. Though the Indians might know that only one of their number could fall, yet the uncertainty as to the victim was sure to dampen the ardor of the rest.

Fred was able to see each of the five Indians distinctly, and he was convinced that the two foremost were those with whom he had exchanged shots. Their appearance was so similar to that of the others that it would seem that this recognition was almost impossible, but he recalled that the countenance of the warrior who had so much trouble in keeping the stone which he used for a shield in front of his face was marked by a couple of round spots of white paint, one above each eyebrow, so laid on that he looked as if he were the

owner of two pairs of eyes. When Fred saw the peculiar marking in front of him, he was warranted in believing it was the same person.

Probably the couple had started off for the purpose of finding a favorable spot to enter the ravine, when they met three of their friends, and all joined in the search for Terry, who, it may be said, was imprisoned in the gorge.

More than once each of the boys saw what they were sure was a chance of bringing down one or two of the Indians. The distance separating the parties was so short that it was hardly possible that either could have missed.

But both were reluctant to fire. If there was restraining power in one loaded gun, there was a good deal more in two, and so long as the warriors came no closer it seemed to the friends that it was wise not to shoot. The situation, however, was so strained that it was evident a break must come very soon.

"Ah, Frid, me boy," said Terry, who began to feel easier in mind, after several minutes had passed without an increase of danger: "there's *one* chap that ought to be here."

"Who is that?"

"Deerfut!" exclaimed Terry in an excited undertone; "if we only had *him* wid us, he would give them spalpeens a good deal more to do than they want. Where is the handsome Shawanoe, that iverybody says looks more like me than I looks like mesilf?"

"It is hard to tell," replied Fred, closely watching the red men down the gorge. "He hasn't been in Greville for a long time. You know he lives off in the woods somewhere, with his wife and little boy."

"So I've heard Mr. Griffiths the missionary say; he married 'em, I believe, and the sly dog had a wife whin he helped git us out of the scrape we got in down there by the Camp in the Mountains—Whist! do ye mind *that*?"

Fred saw what startled his friend. A sixth warrior suddenly joined the others. He advanced on the same loping trot as the others, and stopped near the middle of the ravine as if puzzled by what he saw.

The last arrival carried a long blanket, gathered about his neck and trailing to his knees, and his countenance was smeared as fantastically as the rest. Standing in the middle of

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the gorge, he exchanged several words with those on the other side of the ravine and it looked as if all of them were holding a consultation.

Drawing his arm from under his blanket and grasping his rifle, he gesticulated with such earnestness that it looked as if he was urging his brethren to make a charge upon the two youths at bay.

"That fellow is so defiant," said Fred Linden, "and stands out there in such plain sight, as if daring us to fire, that I have a mind to give him a shot: what do you say, Terry?"

"I'm thinkin' that it would be a good idea just to show 'em that they shouldn't be in too much of a hurry."

Fred Linden had half raised his gun to his shoulder, when a thrill went through him as if from the prick of an arrow. He had made an astounding discovery.

He noticed that the new arrival, while talking with the others, gesticulated with his left hand. Watching him closely he now saw him make a peculiar movement with the same hand: a movement which Fred had seen many a time

"IT'S DEERFOOT, THE SHAWANOE!" 67

before, for it was no less than a distinct signal, intended only for the eyes of himself and his companion.

"My gracious!" gasped Fred: "who do you suppose that Indian warrior is?"

"How should I know?"

"*It's Deerfoot the Shawanoe!*"

Fred Linden spoke the truth.

CHAPTER VII.

"THEY SAW A WONDERFUL SIGHT."

PROBABLY no two youths were ever more amazed than were Fred Lind and Terry Clark when they recognized the ~~red~~ warrior as their old friend Deerfoot the Shawanoe. They had been talking about him only the minute before, and wishing that he of all men was within call, when he trotted forward into view.

The fact that he was in a guise which they had never seen him wear before deceived them as completely as it did the Winnebagoes with whom he was holding converse. His use of his left arm with which to gesticulate, and the peculiar gesture itself, about the meaning of which there could be no mistake, told them what otherwise they would never have suspected.

Terry Clark had noticed the signal which his companion identified and he recognized it as the one that Deerfoot had often employed

when they were hunting or scouting; but he believed that in this case it was merely a coincidence until just as Fred uttered the exclamation it was repeated.

"Be the powers!" muttered Terry, "but that bates ivery thing, as all the mithers used to obsarve about me when I was a baby. Yes, it is Deerfut, but did ye iver see the spalpeen wid such a blanket around him and wid his purty face painted up that way?"

And despite the grave situation the youth indulged in a laugh that shook him from head to foot. Abruptly straightening his face he added:

"But through the paint ye can detiect the same illigant resimblance to my own faytures—do you mind, now?"

Fred made no answer, for to him there was nothing in the situation to warrant the jiviality of Terry, which, as you have learned elsewhere, would crop out at the most inappropriate times.

"Why has he got himself up in that style?" continued the Irish youth, fixing his attention on the'r friend again; "I don't mind that I

iver observed any thing like it wid Deerfut."

Fred Linden made no answer but held his cocked gun in hand ready to fire, and watched the young Shawanoe with the closest interest. Something singular was going on.

But Deerfoot prevailed. There was a general nodding of heads and a series of grunts, and then he started on a trot toward Fred and Terry, who were astonished when they observed that the other red men kept their places instead of following him.

There was an instant when each lad felt a dread of a mistake on their part, and suspected that the daring warrior after all was an enemy like the other savages.

But while in the act of advancing on a slow trot and with his bright eyes fixed on one or the other of his friends, he made a slight signal accompanied by a smile which showed his handsome white teeth and dissipated all doubt of his identity. His back being toward the Winnebagoes, he was not afraid to use his features for the purpose of reassuring his friends.

Some twenty paces separated him from the youths, when he called out in English:

"Let my brothers run as fast as they can! Quick! Now!"

This strange command was uttered in apparent anger. The words being in English were not understood by the Winnebagoes, but the manner must have made them believe that he who uttered them was in a wrathful mood and that they were a summons to surrender.

Such was the impression Deerfoot aimed to give, for his brief interview with the Winnebagoes consisted mainly of his insistence that he was able to enforce the submission of the two youths without any further firing or risk. Being able to speak English, he said he would show them that there was no earthly chance of getting away.

In telling the fugitives this, Deerfoot would tell nothing more than the truth, and since he assured the Winnebagoes that he meant to accompany it by the usual promise of mercy in case of surrender, and since it reduced their personal risk to the minimum, they gave their consent.

So Deerfoot ran forward with his painted face, his blanket wrapped about his shoulders, and his smiling countenance, and called out:

"Let my brothers run as fast as they can! Quick! Now!"

Fortunately for all parties, both Fred Linden and Terry Clark were too wise to wait for any explanation. Nothing could be clearer to them than that the wisest thing to do under all circumstances was to follow the command of Deerfoot the Shawanoe. They obeyed before the words had fairly left his mouth. Fred and Terry at the same moment leaped from where they had been crouching and ran with all speed up the ravine, while a dozen yards or more behind them loped Deerfoot the Shawanoe.

It is impossible to say what the Winnebagoes thought, but the whoops emitted by the Shawanoe must have scattered all suspicions of the trick that was carried out under their very eyes.

"Let my brother run fast," added Deerfoot, in the same angry voice and directing his com-

mand mainly to Terry, who, of course was doing his best.

"It strikes me," muttered the latter, putting forth all the energy of which he was capable, "that it's a mighty poor time to be castin' slurs on a young gintleman's efforts to git along in a gintale manner whin I can't do any gintaler."

A short distance ahead the ravine made a sharp turn to the right. Deerfoot called out:

"My brothers must hide themselves before the Winnebagoes can see them."

This command explained the whole plan of the sagacious Shawanoe, and fortunately, as before, the ears which heard the words comprehended their full meaning.

It should be said however that the escape of the fugitives did not fully hinge upon the desperate scheme that was now on foot. If the Winnebagoes should suspect the trick and the chance for which the youths were looking should not present itself, Deerfoot was prepared as a last resort to turn about and join forces with his young friends and make a fight for their lives.

Providentially this alternative was not forced upon him—at least for a time.

In such a rugged and broken gorge it was natural to look for secure hiding-places—that is secure enough for the purpose needed in this case. Even before the turn was reached, the fugitives saw more than one spot where they could have sheltered themselves, but the act would have been observed by their enemies.

The latter stood a few moments after the singular chase began as if doubting its meaning, and then with loud whoops they started in the same direction so that the two boys in advance, with the Shawanoe close behind and the Winnebagoes a considerable distance to the rear formed the swiftest kind of a procession up the ravine.

You have heard long ago that of the two Fred Linden was much the fleetest of foot; but as he had done many a time, he restrained himself from drawing away from his companion. They had risked their lives together too often for either to seek his advantage at the expense of the other, no matter how hard pressed.

When you bear in mind that the Indians were not far to the rear, and that their speed, to say the least, was fully equal to that of the fugitives, and that if the latter did not find shelter before their pursuers came in sight it would be impossible to do so at all, you will see upon what a narrow chance their hopes depended.

"Here we are!" called out Fred, who despite his care had forged slightly ahead of his companion.

That which caught his eye was a bowlder almost precisely like the one which had sheltered Terry himself for a brief while. It was not the place that they would have selected, had several been presented to them, but there was no choice.

Like a couple of boys playing hide and seek, they whisked behind the huge stone and squeezed themselves into the smallest space possible.

"My gracious!" whispered the panting Fred; "I'm afraid this isn't big enough to hide us, but it's too late now to change."

"The spalpeens won't be thinkin' of Deer-

fat's thrick, so they won't be after looking very sharp to the right or left," was the wise remark of Terry, which, however, could not fully remove the fears of himself and his companion.

The eyes of Deerfoot sparkled when he saw how admirably his friends had "caught on" to his plans. He dashed by the boulder and shouted as if to some party a hundred yards in advance:

"Be careful, my brothers, that the Winnebagoes do not see you! When they have passed, let my brothers make haste to their homes, for there is need of them there."

It seemed as if the Shawanoe had not finished speaking when the fugitives heard the soft but rapid tread of the Winnebagoes' moccasins. It was another extremely fortunate fact that the ravine made a second curve directly beyond the spot where the fugitives had halted, so that when the pursuers dashed around the first and saw the single warrior vanishing around the second, they did not suspect the truth, but supposed he was close upon the heels of the frantic youths that

were straining every nerve to save themselves.

You may imagine the feelings of Fred and Terry, as they stooped down and pressed themselves together as closely as they could. Their suspense was trying, but from the nature of things it could not last long. Each friend afterward insisted that he distinctly heard the beating of the other's heart during those terrible moments.

Although the Winnebagoes caught sight of the Indian whom they supposed to be an ally disappearing from sight behind the second curve, yet he was only a comparatively short distance in advance and they increased their own pace so that it may be said they were almost on his heels.

But lo! Rounding the second curve, they saw a wonderful sight. Beyond that point, the ravine, although rough and broken, was comparatively straight, so that they could see for some distance; and looking up the gorge they discerned nothing of the two pale-faces, but observed the supposed Indian ally bounding

along with a speed like that of the bird on the wing.

The Winnebagoes actually stopped in astonishment, and stared at the extraordinary scene. They had never known of such speed as that shown by the willowy youth who bounded over obstructions and darted up the gorge as if in the mere wantonness of his unapproachable fleetness.

Suddenly this strange youth leaped upon a rock, swung both arms above his head, and uttered a defiant shout. As if this was not explicit enough, he brought his rifle to his shoulder and fired at the amazed group of red men. The distance was too great for the bullet to do any harm, and he who sent it had no thought or wish in that direction. but it served one purpose.

It dawned upon the five Winnebagoes that they were the victims of the shrewdest trick ever played upon them.

CHAPTER VIII.

"GO IN PEACE!"

MEANWHILE the little frontier town of Greville was the scene of the most stirring events in its history.

I have already said that the Indian attack upon it was utterly unexpected on the part of every person in the place. But the settlement of many portions of our country was marked by crises similar to that of which I am telling you. Seeing the steady advance of the pale-faces, the Indians roused themselves to one despairing effort to drive them back. Doubtful of their own success the aborigines fought, nevertheless, with a fierceness that they rarely showed at other times, seemingly willing to pay dearly for an attempt which even if unsuccessful was yet a blow that would be remembered for generations in the annals of the frontier.

The people of Greville must not be blamed

because they were surprised by the attack of the Winnebagoes, for either you or I in their situation would have believed, as did they, that there was no more danger of an Indian assault than there was of being struck by a bolt from heaven at noon on that beautiful spring-day.

Indeed there was good reason to think that not a hostile Indian was within a hundred miles. The few red men who occasionally straggled into the settlement were well-treated, and even one skilled in affairs of the border could see no reason to suspect that any tribe would send enough warriors into that portion of the Louisiana territory to endanger the little town.

It was only common prudence that led the settlers to erect, among their first buildings, one that was meant to answer as a secure shelter in the event of any sudden attack like the one I have set out to describe ; and it was only in the natural order of things that as the seasons came and went the exclusive use of the structure grew to be that of a place for Sunday and week-day instruction.

It so happened that Elijah Griffiths, the silver-haired, but sturdy-framed Moravian missionary, was the first to discover the peril that broke like a cyclone upon the settlement. His house stood at the northern end of Greville. There he and his aged wife lived alone. They had never been blessed with children, and so had come to be looked upon as the father and mother of the small frontier town.

Mr. Griffiths was standing in his own door, looking northward at the mountainous section where Fred Linden and Terry Clark were on the eve of running into serious difficulty, when by the merest accident, or Providence as the good man insisted, his eyes rested upon a spot in the wood more open than the rest.

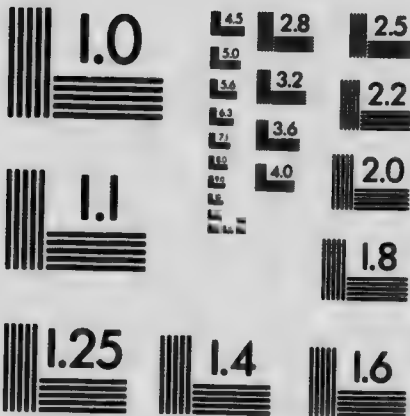
He was as skillful a woodman as Simon Kenton himself, and he was quick to detect a couple of figures moving stealthily toward the settlement, and equally quick to identify them as Winnebago Indians.

While there was nothing noteworthy in this circumstance, yet the apparent care the red men were taking to avoid observation aroused misgiving which speedily became fear when



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he observed several other warriors also approaching the clearing, with extreme caution.

He had seen enough. Catching up his gun he shouted to his wife what had taken place, and started to warn his neighbors, who never dreamed of that which was so close at hand. Just as the missionary dashed out of doors the attack came, and the whirlwind of events that immediately opened was beyond description from such a weak pen as mine.

It occurred to Mr. Griffiths when he had run about half the length of the settlement that not only was his cabin the most exposed of all, but that he had left his wife there without the means of defense. Turning on his heel, with the loaded gun still in his hand, he ran hastily back, escaping more than one shot that whistled close to him.

The settlers were making for their houses; mothers caught up children and dashed within doors; every body seemed to be shouting at the top of his voice, while most of the men hurriedly stationed themselves at the corners of their dwellings or stood boldly at

their own doors and windows and fired at the screeching miscreants on the outer edge of the clearing. You have already been told that the pioneers, great as was their surprise, not only kept the Winnebagoes out of the settlement itself for a time, but stretched more than one dusky warrior on the plain.

Finding the settlers defending themselves so stubbornly the assailants remained along the edge of the wood, where they could avail themselves of the protection of the trees, and fired as often as a chance presented itself. More than one of the Winnebagoes displayed a bravery which none of the white men could have surpassed, and there were several raids attempted by the miscreants that aroused a certain admiration on the part of those who were forced at the risk of their lives to beat them back.

The missionary Griffiths was within a few rods of the cabin when he received his first shock. In passing out he had closed the door behind him, and now it was open—something for which he could not account, and which deepened his misgiving.

Before he could reach the open door an Indian warrior came backward through it. He came too with such haste that he went over, with the toes of his moccasins pointing toward the sky. A tomahawk, which he had been grasping in his right hand, fell from it as though the arm had become paralyzed.

"Methinks that Abigail has used violence with him," was the grim conclusion of the missionary, who never felt prouder of his gentle helpmeet than he did that moment.

The truth was that when the wretch bounded through the door with uplifted tomahawk, he meant to brain every one within reach. The sweet-faced Abigail Griffiths had caught the fearful meaning of the words uttered by her husband as he ran by her, but in his excitement he left her without any weapon with which to defend herself.

"It will be wise for me to follow Elijah," was her conclusion, stepping forward and raising the latch of the door. She had drawn it open, when she walked to the fire which was burning on the hearth, and picked up

from the little pile near it a stick three feet long and as thick as her wrist.

"If I am compelled to defend myself I can strike a strong blow with this ——"

Just then the entrance was darkened and a Winnebago warrior burst into view. The sudden transition from the bright sun-light to the twilight of the cabin dimmed his vision during the first few seconds; but if his sight was defective, a moment later he gazed upon more stars than Herschel ever discovered.

Abigail Griffiths possessed much of the promptness of her husband in emergencies like that which was now upon her. The Indian showed some bravery in dashing through the door as he had done, without any knowledge of whom he was likely to encounter, but he did not remain in ignorance long.

Whack!

And the Indian executed the backward somersault to which I have already alluded, Gathering himself together in a dazed sort of way, he began climbing to his feet. He had not yet straightened up, when he was seized in the iron grip of the missionary himself.

"Go in peace," said he, delivering a kick which to all intents and purposes equaled that of a mule. The Winnebago was lifted clear of the ground, and when he alighted on his feet he kept on running straight for the woods, for whose shelter he never longed more earnestly than he did that minute.

"Is there any one hurt in here?" asked the missionary, hurrying through the open door.

"No, Elijah, but I think the one who went out a few minutes ago was jarred, somewhat."

"There is no doubt about that," replied the good man, closing the door again, and drawing in the latchstring.

"Are you not harmed?" asked the wife, surveying her panting husband with some misgiving.

"Thank God, I have not received a scratch," was the response; "though I am sure that several shots were aimed at me."

By this time the shouts, yells and firing seemed to fill the air, and the two listened for a minute while their faces grew pale.

"There must have been many lives lost

already," said he, in an awed voice, "and many more must fall before the red men can be driven off."

"I had no thought of any thing like this taking place."

"Nor had any one in the settlement. I will take a look through the door, for perhaps I may do some good."

"Have a care," warned his wife, who could not forget her recent experience.

"I will do so, Abigail——"

Mr. Griffiths had just raised the latch when there came a shock that seemed to carry the door off its hinges. At the very moment when the fastening was unloosed, two Indian warriors threw themselves with might and main against the puncheon doors.

The result was unexpected to themselves. Their hope was that the heavy structure might be so loosened that it could be forced inward by quickly repeating the catapult charge. On the contrary, there was no resistance at all, and both Indians not only sprawled full length on the floor, but carried the missionary down with them in the general collapse.

Quick to realize that it was a fight to the death, Griffiths seized the one nearest him by the throat, and threw himself astride of his breast. Looking down in the painted face, gleaming with ferocity, he recognized him as Black Bear, the famous war chief of the Winnebagoes.

"You are a dog!" called the indignant missionary, knowing that his words would be understood: "for a dog will sometimes forget the hand that feeds him; it is but a few months ago that I divided my venison with you, and when the night grew cold you shared my blanket with me; now you come as my enemy. Very well—let us be enemies!"

And holding the chieftain as though he were wedged in a vise, the good man began tightening his grip upon his throat.

Undoubtedly he would have had the miscreant, who fully deserved in the excitement of the moment the good man forgot that there was a second foe in the room.

The other warrior, as it happened, went down on the floor underneath his chieftain. He was somewhat bruised, but he quickly

pulled himself loose and crawled toward the open door. In the shock of his fall the hunting-knife which he grasped in his right hand flew half way across the room. Stealthily moving around so as to place himself behind the couple on the floor, he once more closed his dusky fingers about the weapon and began advancing toward the missionary, who held Black Bear at his mercy, and was expressing his views by choking him to insensibility.

But if the missionary forgot all about his second enemy, so did that enemy forget about another inmate of the apartment. It may have been that he considered an elderly gray-haired lady of no account in such a crisis, but if so, he made the greatest mistake of his life.

The treacherous Winnebago was stealing across the floor with the tread of a panther advancing upon its prey when every ear tingled with the explosion of a rifle, its sharpness intensified in the confinement of the room. Simultaneously with the report arose the ear-splitting screech of the Winnebago, who with a single bound went forward on his hands and face as dead as dead could be.

So you see what a blunder the warrior made in omitting the old lady from his calculations. She had not lived three-score years on the frontier to leave any lessons unlearned. Detecting the purpose of the savage, she caught up her husband's gun, and I need not describe the effective work she did with it.

The missionary turned his head to learn the cause of the report, and Black Bear made a furious effort to free himself. Mr. Griffiths had to put on the brakes to subdue his dusky enemy, but before proceeding to extremes the excellent man relented.

"I can not take your life," said he, releasing the savage, "and I won't do so if you will go peaceably; in order that you may make sure of doing so, I will give you some assistance. Go thou in peace!"

The kick which he delivered was certainly equal to that of a few minutes before, and it must have jarred every tooth in Black Bear's head. Leaving his gun, tomahawk and knife behind, he came out of the door very much after the style with which you sometimes take a header from the perch on your bicycle.

Catching up the inanimate figure the missionary pitched it out of the door with a force that caused it to fall several yards away. Though he preached peace and good-will toward all men, he knew that emergencies were sure to arise in which there was nothing to do but to fight; and this was one of those emergencies.

Once more the door was fastened—this time, in addition to the heavy latch, by means of a massive bar stretched across the middle.

"There, Abigail," observed the husband, "let us forbid all visitors until they make their business known."

CHAPTER IX.

"AND IT WAS DONE."

YOU and I can not conceive how any individual who receives such a prodigious kick as did Black Bear, chief of the Winnabagoes, can feel any thing like forgiveness toward him who inflicts the indignity upon him. If a Caucasian finds it difficult to summon up pleasant emotions at such a time, you can understand what a volcano of wrath raged in the bosom of the red Indian who was kicked clean out of the cabin of the kind-hearted missionary.

Indeed, Black Bear was so overcome by his fury that for the moment he lost his head. He had no weapons with him, and he could not forget from his recent experience that he might as well dash against the solid rock as to attempt to turn about and re-enter the cabin; but standing a few paces away, with his whole

frame tingling with the smart caused by the heavy shoe of the muscular missionary, he began a series of whoops intended to summon his warriors around him. His anger was such that he was eager to call them off from assailing the rest of the settlers, and bid them concentrate their fury upon this single cabin. He would have given half a dozen of his followers for the sake of getting that pleasant-faced missionary in his power.

I remarked above that Black Bear began a series of whoops intended to call his followers about him, but he did not finish them.

Seeing the missionary fleeing homeward in such excitement one of the settlers started to follow him in the hope of being of some service, but the fighting became so hot that he stopped at the house adjoining and stood at the corner to await his chance.

A couple of shots fired at him so disarranged the pioneer's plans that he was unable to settle himself for a minute or two, but finally he brought his gun to his shoulder at the moment Black Bear began signaling to his warriors.

He aimed carefully, fired deliberately and succeeded admirably. Enough be it to say that Black Bear never took any interest in the subsequent raids of his people.

The settler who sent the decisive shot was James Bowlby, whom perhaps you will recall. His lamed ankle had recovered long ago and he and his old friends Linden and Hardin had been on their hunting and trapping expeditions each winter, just as they had been for years previous to their introduction to the reader.

More than that, Bowlby recognized Black Bear.

"*You* are of the most account," he muttered, "for you are the leader—so I'll snuff you out!"

And it was done.

Although the series of signals or calls were split in twain while they were passing the lips of the chieftain, yet enough of them reached the ears of his warriors to produce a response. The daring red men, obedient to the summons of their leader, issued from the shelter of the forest and dashed across the intervening

space, ready to risk their lives at Black Bear's bidding.

More than a dozen of the savages responded to the call of the chieftain ; but half the distance only was passed when they saw him fall before the well-aimed shot of the pioneer, fired from the corner of an adjoining cabin.

In one respect the act of Bowlby was disastrous in its consequences, for it nerved the advancing Winnebagoes to try more than they would have done, but for the extinguishment of their leader.

They uttered whoops of fury, and charged into the settlement like a whirlwind. Bowlby had no time to reload his gun and he was so far in advance of his supports, as they may be called, that he saw that only one thing could save him—that was to fall back at the highest rate of which he was capable.

At such a time no man can afford to stand on ceremony or to think of dignity. Bowlby whirled short about and ran with might and main for the next cabin, which, as it happened, was that of George Linden, the father of Fred.

From the two corners of the building and from the lower windows, men were firing upon the Winnebagoes. The Indians were determined to force their way, as it seemed, through the heart of the settlement.

Three red men flung themselves against the door of the missionary's house, but it was too strongly barred to be endangered by such an attack. Two of them hurried after their companions; the third was indefinitely detained by a ball from Mr. Griffiths's rifle.

Bowlby expected to be riddled with bullets before he could reach the nearest protection, but the good fortune which had attended him so often did not desert him now. He knew that he was shot at several times on the run, but you must bear in mind that when the excitement is so great there is little chance for accurate aim, and the majority of the shots which the Indians fired at him went wide of the mark.

Bowlby was on the very threshold of escape, as may be said, when he found himself confronted by a Winnebago, who, to say the least, acted in a singular manner. He carried a rifle in

one hand and a knife in the other, but, instead of using either, he threw up both after the manner of a person seeking to frighten a flock of hens into taking another course. At the same time he uttered the exclamation, "*Huh!*" meaning no doubt, to order the white man to halt and submit.

Bowlby did not stop, but sent his fist against the painted visage, and toppled the red man to the earth as though he were a ten-pin. Leaping over his prostrate body, he stopped short behind a corner of the building, where Rufus Hardin was loading and firing as rapidly as he could.

And there amid the indescribable din and confusion, he coolly rammed a bullet down his rifle barrel, poured powder into the pan, drew back and looked around to see what he could do.

"It'll go bad if they get inside the house," remarked Hardin, whose face was pale with excitement.

"Why?" asked Bowlby, who did not see why the danger to one structure should be greater than that to another.

"Not only are Linden and his wife and daughter in there, but others have taken refuge with them. What a pity we had not time to get them all into the block-house!"

And Hardin's fears were only too well founded. A terrible disaster to the settlers was close at hand.

CHAPTER X.

"I SURRENDER!"

WITH that instinct which at times seems to be a part of the nature of the Indian, the Winnebagoes saw that the cabin of the Lindens afforded them the best chance of taking some of the prisoners of whom they were in quest. After delivering a scattering volley, they too skurried for any and every thing that could serve them as a screen, and began returning the fire that was poured upon them from every quarter.

Had this intrepid band comprised all whom the pioneers were obliged to look after, you may be sure that they would have cut them off to a man. But as is often the case in civilized warfare, the assailants did their best to create a diversion in their favor. Not only did they try, but they succeeded to a galling degree.

The Winnebagoes on the edge of the clearing fired as fast as they could reload and aim, some of them in their eagerness exposing themselves more than is the custom of their race. Their firing was so constant that the other settlers found it out of their power to give any attention to the red men who had entered the northern or upper part of the settlement.

It was a singular fact that during these exciting minutes not a single defender availed himself of the shelter of the block-house. That which was meant as an impregnable defense against assaults of this character became, from the force of circumstances, utterly useless.

Suddenly smoke was seen rising from a cabin near the southern extremity of the settlement. By some means unknown to the pioneers the assailants had managed to use the torch.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Hardin; "McCluskey's house is on fire, and there are half a dozen children in it!"

"Quick!" called Bowlby, to those who were making such a brave defense against the band of Winnebagoes; "we must put out the flames or they'll be burned alive!"

This thrilling appeal was heard above the din and turmoil, and there was a dash for the endangered building.

Linden, Griffiths, and the rest must hold their own until the urgent peril was overcome.

Some eight or ten lusty pioneers bounded at the top of their speed between the cabins and down the single street, if it may be called such, until they reached the building from which the blue smoke was rising.

The mischief had been done by a single warrior, whose exploit approached the marvelous. Lighting a torch on the margin of the wood, he had run across the intervening space, circling the brand above his head, and heedless of more than one shot that met him. Unharméd, he hastily gathered up such sticks, twigs, and combustible material as were within reach, piled them at the corner of the building, and set them in a blaze.

As if he never knew the meaning of danger, he calmly watched the progress of the flames, which soon took hold of the seasoned logs. He was quietly surveying his frightful work when he discovered the pioneers rushing down

upon him. Then he leaped away, and ran at the top of his speed for the woods.

Man after man brought his gun to his shoulder and discharged it after the flying fugitive; but when he bounded among the trees he was without a scratch. Thus it is that an inexplicable good fortune sometimes helps a man through a labyrinth of danger, in which a dozen others are sure to fall.

It was the work of but a few minutes to dash out the blaze which, despite the smoke it gave forth, amounted to little. It looked hardly possible that the astonishing attempt would be repeated.

If any further proof of the bravery of the Winnebagoes was needed, it was given while the party of settlers rushed toward the other portion of the settlement to put out the burning house of McCluskey.

Before the whites could run the short distance, the surviving warriors, nine in number, leaped from their partial shelter and charged at the top of their speed toward the building, whose inmates they seemed determined to bring to terms.

While wonderful good fortune had attended many of the efforts of the whites, it now ran the other way. The house of George Linden, like a few others in Greville, had a front and back door. The former was secured by such a massive wooden bolt that it may be said to have been as strong as the walls themselves, but the rear entrance had nothing more than the ordinary latch which was so common on the frontier.

During the few minutes at command, the defenders did what they could to remedy this weakness. Chairs and benches were piled against the door, but after all these could not amount to much in the event of the Winnebagoes making a break for that point.

But that is precisely what they did. Whether it was fate, guess-work or knowledge can not be said, but so it was that three of the warriors sped with might and main over the short distance as though they were trying to leap across some broad chasm.

When within six or eight feet each in turn leaped from the ground, turning half-way round in the air, so that his back struck the

door with the utmost momentum that could be given. They followed one another so closely that the thumps were as rapid as the discharge of a magazine rifle.

The second Indian who bounded against the door felt it yielding, and he said something to his follower which caused him to brace himself against mishap. The forceful impact of the last scattered every thing behind the door, which flew wide open.

Another display of skill and daring on the part of the warriors took place at this moment. Had the three leaders, as they may be called, been unsupported, nothing could have saved them, but the way was no more than opened when the whole nine swarmed through, so close together that it may be said they trod on one another's heels.

Within the cabin was George Linden, his wife and daughter, Molly Bourne, a neighbor's daughter, who was a little younger than Edith Linden, and Hank Grubbens. The last was a young man of such indolent habits that he was considered the ne'er-do-well of the settlement. While he was not believed to be vicious, yet he

was held in small consideration. He was without any relatives in Greville, and spent most of his time in hunting, following wild bees to their hiding-places, fishing and lounging among the neighbors.

I must say here that although George Linden seemed unaware of the fact, it was evident to many others that Grubbens had turned a partial eye upon sweet Edith, who could not believe that the fellow had such impudence.

The mother and the two girls knew how to fight as bravely as the two men, who fired from the windows as rapidly as they could reload their guns. They were used to the rifle, but unfortunately there was but a single one among the three, so that they could not do much to defend the cabin.

But for the help of the other pioneers, who were firing from every coigne of vantage, the little garrison could not have held out against the first charge of the Winnebagoes. The moment their friends left to put out the fire, this garrison, as you have learned, was helpless.

The first shock showed George Linden that

nothing could keep the Indians out. All three of the guns were empty when the impact of the second savage opened the door far enough for those within to see the crouching figure as it was driven against it. The third, having received the hint, as I have told, did not allow himself to be carried off his feet as he followed the yielding structure into the apartment.

An instant before this crisis Linden called to his wife, daughter and Molly Bourne to group themselves behind him and Hank.

"We will die fighting," he said, as calmly as if talking about a trip with Bowlby and Hardin to the mountains. "These are the bravest set of Winnebagoes I ever saw, and there's no help for us."

"I'm with you—especially with Edith," said Grubbens, not quite able to master a tremor in his voice.

Both had clubbed their guns, and, with the stocks drawn back over their shoulders, awaited the onset. They did not have long to wait.

The warrior who drove the door open, and

led the others, shouted, even while he was skurrying from the force of his own momentum across the room :

"Stop ! stop ! S'render—no hurt !"

George Linden knew well enough that as a rule one of the Indian preliminaries to massacre is the pledge to protect their prisoners. Not for an instant did he relax his grip around the muzzle of his gun, but was as resolved as ever to die defending his loved ones.

To his consternation, however, Hank Grubbens accepted the order, with an eagerness that left no doubt of his cowardice.

"There ain't no use in fightin', Linden," he said, "'cause they're too many for us, so let's stop afore we've killed half of 'em, and make the rest so mad that our scalps are gone sure."

Throwing his rifle on the floor, he called out:

"I surrender!"

Only by a strong effort did the wrathful pioneer restrain himself from braining the poltroon at his side.

The Indian who made the demand for a

surrender attempted to dodge the terrific blow which was aimed at him by Linden. Despite his agility he succeeded only in partly doing so. Had it fallen fairly it would have killed him; as it was, it sent him spinning against the opposite wall of the room, with his ideas so muddled that for several minutes he was of no account.

This particular party of Winnebagoes must have been engaged in similar business long enough to acquire a certain skill, for none could have handled the infuriated Linden more effectively. Before he could draw his arms back to deliver a second blow with his rifle, one of the warriors grasped the stock.

You can see how great is the advantage of one thus holding a gun over him who grasps it by the muzzle. With little exertion, but by a dexterous flirt, he fairly snapped the weapon from the hands of the owner, who was made defenseless before he could strike another blow.

"Don't make a fool of yourself!" called Grubbens, from the other side of the room; "what's the use of trying to fight when there

ain't no show? Knock under, Linden, and save your scalp!"

The valiant speaker had a couple of warriors near him and the fact could not be disputed that no violence had been offered him. In his front were the rest of the Winnebagoes all fully armed and unquestionably masters of the situation. Some held their knives aloft, others their tomahawks, while two or three were continually calling out in their stumbling English:

"S'render! s'render! won't hurt! s'render!"

"Where are Bowlby and the rest?" groaned Linden; "why don't they come to our help?"

"They've got their hands full," called Grubbens, in mortal fear lest his friend's stubbornness should bring vengeance upon all. "I tell you there ain't no show; if you don't give in, mighty quick, you'll be tomahawked."

It might well be said that the pioneer was rash to hesitate to call out his submission, since his only weapon had been wrenched from his grasp; but that which restrained his words and which caused him to back against the side of the room and assume the posture of a pugi-

list awaiting assault, was the hope that every moment would bring half a dozen of his friends through the open door.

Why they failed to appear was more than he could understand, since only a few minutes before they had done their best to aid in the defense from the outside.

An unexpected truth, however, became apparent within a few seconds after the disarming of Linden: the Winnelagoes, as I have intimated, preferred to take prisoners rather than to kill their enemies. They did not offer to harm Grubbens nor did they make an assault upon him, though they could have slain him in a twinkling.

At the moment when Linden braced himself against the side of the room so that no one could get behind him, the three females cowered in the nearest corner. They may have thought it strange that their protector should suddenly have deserted them in that manner, but he knew he could do nothing in the way of their protection and his hope was to prolong the contest, if such it might be called, until his friends should arrive.

But matters could not remain thus long, for brave as were the Winnebagoes, they would not allow him to stand at bay when it was so easy to bring him to terms.

One of the warriors stepped up in front of the three females cowering in the corner and raised his tomahawk. Holding it poised over his head he looked toward the father and asked:

"S'render?"

The gesture and words were too eloquent to be misconstrued. Without a second's hesitation, George Linden dropped his hands and called out:

"I surrender!"

CHAPTER XI.

'YOU SHOULD SMILE THROUGH YOUR TEARS.'

WITH the same astonishing coolness which this band of Winnebagoes had shown from the first, they now started off with their prizes.

Never was there a more docile prisoner than Hank Grubtens. When one of the captors ordered him by a gesture to place himself in front of the door, he obeyed with so much enthusiasm that he came near knocking a warrior from his feet. Next Mrs. Linden and the two younger ladies were led out beside him, and then Linden himself brought up the rear.

The females were dazed by the rush of events, and they obeyed with a meekness which caused the heart of Linden to ache for them.

None could know better than did the Winnebagoes that every second was precious.

They knew why the whites had left the vicinity with such abruptness, and they had no doubt that they would soon be back again.

The cutside was no sooner reached than the dusky "director of ceremonies" pointed to the wood, and said to the captives :

"Go—go fast !"

The brief walk to the door placed Grubbens at the head.

"Of course," he hastened to say, "shall I run ?"

"Run—run—go fast !"

The fellow broke into a pace which not only took him directly toward the enemy's lines, but carried him in advance of the other prisoners who, under the guard of the rest, began a rapid walk in the direction of the wood.

They were hardly clear of the house when Bowlby and his friends, having quenched the flames, came running back. The hostiles seeing them, instantly placed the four captives so as to expose them to any shots that might be fired by their friends. This was done by putting Linden and the three ladies side by

side while the Indians walked in front of them.

You will see that in order to reach a red man the bullet would have to pass dangerously close to one of the captives. Fearing that the attempt might be made by his impetuous friend, Linden turned his head and while still walking waved his hand as a protest against any such interference.

He was not a minute too soon, for Bowlby already had his rifle at his shoulder when the warning gesture caused him to lower it again.

"What's the matter with George?" he asked in a wondering way, turning toward Hardin, who was at his elbow and on the point also of sending a shot after the party; "I had my varmint picked out, and there wouldn't have been any mistake about droppin' him, though the bullet would have to pass within an inch of his darter's head."

"I could bring down that other fellow," added Hardin, "and George knows we would not hurt any of his people, but it must be that he don't want us to anger the Indians out there."

"That's it," said Bowlby, stepping back so as to gain the corner of the building as he realized that somebody was taking a fly at him from among the trees. "If the varmints thought there was a likelihood of losin' the folks they would tomahawk 'em just as they have done many a time afore—By gracious! I can't stand *that!*"

By this time three-fourths of the distance between the settlement and woods was crossed, so that it may be said the captives were beyond all possibility of rescue. The firing that had been so brisk for some time almost ceased, the lull being caused by the general interest which every one took in the captives who were carried off by such a small band, under the very eyes of those who it would seem ought to have saved them, but who through a strange perversity of fate, were denied the power of doing so.

At the moment the Winnebagoes felt sure of their success in carrying off the prisoners, one of the daring band deliberately stepped from before them, and with a temerity that was amazing made an insulting gesture at

Bowlby and his companions, who had held their fire in obedience to the protest of Linden.

The insult was a costly one. At sight of it Bowlby uttered the exclamation I have recorded and with surprising quickness aimed and fired at his insulter.

Enough be it to say that it was the last time that particular Winnebago ever indulged in any thing of that nature.

The next minute the captors and captives vanished among the trees, and the success of the intrepid band of warriors was complete.

This exploit—for it certainly was one of the most marked ever achieved by a party of American Indians—was the crisis of the last attack ever made on the village of Greville. From the security of the forest the assailants kept up a dropping fire on the settlers, but the shots were sent rather in the hope of checking any project which might be entertained of rescue than with the thought of doing any harm to the defenders.

The latter were too vigilant to be caught off their guard, and they were equally prompt in discharging their guns without waiting for a

chance to make their aim effective. It perhaps was not remarkable, under the circumstances, that the last shot which did any execution was that of James Bowlby.

The assailants, having ended their dreadful work, prepared to withdraw from the vicinity. While they had gained only a partial success they had paid dearly for it. More than a dozen of their best warriors had been laid low, and among them was Black Bear, the most famous chief they had had for a generation. Ten-fold the triumph achieved would not have paid for his loss.

The sad result to the settlers was one that caused the Winnebago raid to be referred to with a shudder for many long years afterwards. Six men, two boys, and two women had been stretched in death while fighting bravely, and an entire family (excepting the absent son) with two other persons, had been carried away prisoners.

All this was sorrowful enough, but the raid resulted in another series of events, ending in a tragedy which in many respects was sadder still. We are now on the threshold of those

events, about which I shall make haste to tell you.

The Winnebagoes carried off their dead and wounded, as is the custom of the people when it is in their power to do so; but, as to show their contempt for the whites, they halted among the precipitous hills which were the scene of the opening events of this story.

Within two hundred yards of the very spot where Fred Linden and Terry Clark crouched behind the boulder and saw the pursuing Winnebagoes pass by, they stopped, built a large camp-fire and prepared to stay as long as they chose, just as they would have done had they known that not a white man was within a hundred miles.

What a commentary on the cruelty of mankind were the incidents that followed this encampment!

It was fortunate that among the wounded settlers there was none who was seriously hurt. Barring accident, all were sure to recover. But the dead! They were gone, and many a heart was bowed with grief.

It was at such times that the good Moravian

missionary and his wife were like ministering angels. They had done their utmost to beat back the fierce marauders, and it can not be denied that they did their duty well. They knew every man, woman and child in the settlement, and they were so acquainted with their surroundings, their habits, and their peculiarities, that their words were not only tender and sweet, but they were uttered with a tact which made them more comforting than those of any other person could have been.

The bodies were soon prepared for burial. In the little plot of ground, a short distance to the south of the settlement, they were placed away in the narrow graves amid the sobs and moans of their friends.

"Why this blow has been permitted to fall upon our fair village," said the preacher at the conclusion of the sad rites, "is not for any of us to try to say, but that He doeth all things well is as true as that the sun is shining at this moment in yonder sky. God's ways are mysterious, and beyond the power of man to understand. The affliction is a sore one, but

were it in my power to dry those tears I would not do so. There is a time to weep as well as to laugh, and hard would be that heart that was not impressed by these sorrowful doings.

"We had been spared so long that I, like the rest of you, had come to believe that all danger from the rage of the red men had passed. That we were mistaken has been proven at a fearful cost. We can not be taken thus again at disadvantage, though I am sure that the wild men have struck their last blow against our homes.

"But, my dear friends, we do not mourn as do those without hope. My heart is suffused with a sweet, peaceful joy when I reflect that each one of the men, women and boys whom we have laid away to sleep, until awakened by the trump at the morning of resurrection, has gone forth fully prepared. I have knelt in prayer with every one; I have heard their joyful testimony; I know that they are with Him who is love, and who will hold them safe in His blessed arms for evermore.

"What comfort can there be like that! You

should smile through your tears and you should be able to say with me: 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be His Holy Name.'"

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CHAPTER XII.

"WE SHALL SOON KNOW THE TRUTH."

SIMILAR in some respects, and yet widely different, were the ceremonies going on among the rocky hills scarce a mile away.

The distance to the Winnebago villages was so great that it was decided, since there were no horses at command, that none of those that had fallen should be carried thither. With the help of the numerous hatchets in the hands of the remaining warriors, a large excavation was made in the rocky ground, and in this the bodies were buried. They were not stretched on their backs, as is the custom of civilized people, but all were placed in a sitting posture, with their faces turned toward the west.

With each warrior were placed his rifle, knife and tomahawk (excepting where they had been lost and could not be recovered). Had the red men been the owners of dogs, as is often the case, the canines would have had to

bear their former masters company, so it was fortunate for those quadrupeds that they happened just then to be somewhere else.

Black Bear, the chieftain, was honored with a separate grave, where he sat bolt upright, ready to greet the morning sun. He was put away with the utmost tenderness, and a large boulder was rolled in place over the grave, so as to prevent the remains from being disturbed by wild animals.

There being no inanimate bodies left above ground, the survivors expressed their lamentations by a series of howls, groans, moans, and cries whose dolefulness was beyond imagination. For more than an hour they kept up a monotonous dance, during which the dismal sounds never slackened. They sprinkled dirt on their crowns, struck their breasts savagely, and some of the most ardent thrust skewers of wood into their flesh. The scene was weird and impressive.

And yet why need there have been mourning in the lodges of the Winnebagoes, and among the cabins of the pioneers?

The only reason was that which causes

nearly all the sorrow and suffering in the world—the sinfulness of man himself.

As may be supposed, the captives of the Winnebagoes were interested spectators of these savage ceremonies. Although Linden had seen a great deal of Indian life (for you know that he was one of the founders of the Greville settlement), he had never before witnessed any thing like this. To his wife and daughter, to Molly Bourne, and Hank Grubbens, it was entirely new.

There was something in the barbarous rites which accorded with the gloomy spirits of all, for it need not be said that they were depressed to a painful degree. None of them had received any indignity or cruelty at the hands of their captors, though each was confident suffering awaited them.

The entire party stood to one side, looking upon the scene, and naturally commenting upon that which passed before their eyes. Perhaps I should except from the general depression Grubbens, who, if weighed down by his hapless situation, felt it to a less degree than did the rest.

The little company of captives stood just far enough removed not to interfere with the actions of the Winnebagoes. The spot approached more nearly a level than would have been looked for among such a mass of rocky and broken hills. Mrs. Linden was between her daughter and Molly Bourne, while Grubbens was on the right—that is, next to Edith, and her father was at the other end of the short line, close to Molly.

The five were silent spectators until the remains of Black Bear were covered, the stone rolled over the grave, and the loudest part of the lamentations ended.

"They are almost through," remarked Edith; "I wonder what will come next."

"Why, they'll start on the tramp to the north-east—that is toward their hunting grounds and lodges."

"And I suppose we shall have to go with them."

"There can't be much doubt of that," replied the father, as he smiled grimly at the simplicity of his child; "do you imagine they would go to the trouble and danger of taking us

prisoners for the sake of turning us free again?"

"I do wonder," added Edith, directing her words to her father, "what is to become of us?"

"Indeed! who can tell?" asked her mother.

"Alas, I can not," said the parent, "except to say that one of two fates is in store for us; they intend to hold us prisoners for an indefinite time, or they will put us to death."

"Suppose they offer us for ransom?"

"I have been thinking of that, but I believe it unlikely."

"You know that Mr. Bowlby and Terry Clark were given in exchange for their chief some years ago."

"Yes, but this situation is very different from that. That same chief who served such a good purpose has just been put under ground, and can never be of further use. We had something to give which the Winnebagoes valued more highly than a score of white men and boys. Besides," added Mr. Linden, as if to clinch the matter, "Deerfoot the Shawanoe had charge of that business."

"I wonder where he is now," said Edith, looking around, as if she expected to see him sitting on one of the rocks and acting the part of spectator.

"No doubt he is miles away in his own home, with his wife and little boy."

"Have you ever seen them?" asked Molly, whose friendship for the young warrior was as deep as that of every one in the village.

"Yes; Bowlby, Hardin and I ran against his cabin one day last fall, just before we went on our hunting expedition to the Ozarks. His wife belongs to some tribe east of the Mississippi, I think, and is just as pretty as he, while the little fellow who calls Deerfoot father, is a picture."

It was a partial relief to the wife and young ladies to listen to Mr. Linden's account of the visit paid to the cabin of Deerfoot, which he had located in such a secluded spot that it was almost impossible to find; for the Shawanoe knew that there were members of his own race, and even of his own tribe, who were eager to seize any chance to strike him a mortal blow,

and none could be more mortal than if aimed at his wife and little boy.

"I don't suppose," added the father, "that there is any use of trying to guess what the Winnebagoes mean to do with us, but I suspect that they will take us to their lodges, which are a long way to the north-east."

"And then?" asked Edith.

"I dare venture no more."

He spoke so lightly that he concealed the awful fear in his heart; but the man whose experience with the Indians was more extended than that of most of his friends, believed that a shocking fate awaited all.

The main cause of this belief was the punishment which the assailants had received. Almost a score of their men had fallen, including their great war chief, Black Bear. One of the leading traits of the American Indian is his thirst for revenge, and it was not to be expected that the chance to wreak it upon these captives would be allowed to pass. The fact that some consideration was shown them just then could be no guarantee of the future.

'WE SHALL SOON KNOW THE TRUTH.' 129

"At any rate," said Mr. Linden, with a sigh,
"we shall soon know the truth."

The knowledge of the intention of their captors was indeed much closer than even he suspected, for it was but a few minutes distant.

CHAPTER XIII.

"WHERE 'S HE?"

THE first Winnebago upon whom George Linden fixed his attention was the treacherous miscreant Ap-to-to. He keenly regretted that in the brisk fighting which had taken place around the settlement it had fallen to the lot of that warrior to escape the bullets that brought so many of his comrades low.

Had he known that Ap-to-to had spent almost his entire time in those precipitous hills he would have understood why he came out of the fray without a scratch.

As might be supposed, Ap-to-to was one of the most demonstrative of the mourners of Black Bear. It was natural that it should be so, for he was always a courtier of the fiery leader, who held him in great regard. In fact, Ap-to-to stood so high in his favor that many of his warriors had come to look upon him as

the destined successor of the sachem and chief-tain. What more fitting, therefore, than that he should express his grief in the most extravagant fashion?

Linden made no reference to Ap-to-to, though he had often told his family of his ingratitude and baseness. Indeed, he had depicted him in such strong colors that he was afraid of the effect that would be produced by the knowledge that he was a member of the party which held the whites captive.

But the sight of the warrior with the distorted nose was so disturbing to the pioneer that it was hard to conceal his fear. He was certain from several glances given him by the savage that he recognized Linden, who had been involved in the series of adventures with him four years before, and that he was exulting over the chance to revenge himself upon him. *Then* he had the power to injure only the hunter and his boy: *now* the rest of the family were in his hands, and the loss which the Winnebagoes had suffered would justify the successor of Black Bear in proceeding to any length he thought proper.

The barbarous funeral ceremonies were hardly finished when Ap-to-to walked over and paused in front of the captives. Merely glancing at the rest, he fixed his eyes upon Linden, who said :

"Well, Ap-to-to, we meet again."

"Howdy do !" asked the savage, extending his hand, which the pioneer thought best to take.

"How do you do !" said Linden, answering the query, after the usual fashion, with a similar question.

Still looking steadily into the face of the settler, who felt it hard to restrain his impulse to strike him, the savage added :

"Black Bear dead—soon all you be dead."

The ladies, who were listening, gasped, and Grubbens moved uneasily.

"Why have you spared us so long !"

"Ain't ready—wait till reach lodge—den kill you—you—you—you—you !"

As he uttered the words, he pointed his finger in turn to each of the captives, beginning with Linden, as though he were telling them off for execution.

There was no quailing this time. Even Grubbens braced himself, and faced the inevitable with a firmness which did much to remove the disgust Linden felt for his collapse at the critical moment in the cabin.

"We are ready any time, Ap-to-to ; we gave your people the hardest fight they have had for a long time ; we killed more of your warriors than you did of our men, and we are not afraid to take the consequences ; but why do you wait till we reach the lodges of your people ? They are a long distance away."

"Squaws—pappooses—all see pale face-cry and beg—we please them—we make you cry and beg."

"You can never do that," replied Linden, compressing his lips and forcing back a shudder at the thought of his loved ones undergoing the torture so vividly pictured by the broken words of the wretch before him.

All who heard Ap-to-to took in the full meaning of his terrible threats, and something akin to despair filled their hearts. George Linden had lived too long on the frontier, and had come in contact with too many Indians to see

any ground for hope. He and his friends were prisoners in the hands of between seventy and eighty Winnebago warriors, every one of whom was well armed, and most of whom had proven their bravery that morning. Having lost so many of their own men, they were not likely to give up the captives without a sharp fight. Even if driven into a corner, they would tomahawk every one on the first likelihood of losing them.

Linden put a brave face on the matter. He reminded his friends that he himself had been in many desperate situations, where his prospects were as dark as they were at that moment, and yet he had been delivered.

In saying this, the husband and father was guilty of a deception, or rather exaggeration, which is hard to censure. He never had been so placed that there seemed really no hope at all, but that was the outlook now.

Although the pioneer did not reveal his thoughts, yet he was dismayed by the result of a little computation which continually ran through his mind. He knew that Bowlby, Hardin, and indeed all of his friends, would

do their best to help him and his companions, but Linden's calculation convinced him of one dreadful fact: it was impossible to send a force strong enough to defeat the war party of Winnebagoes.

If you will reflect that, fighting under cover of their houses and behind other screens, the entire force of settlers was only just able to beat off their assailants, you will see the self-evident truth of Linden's conclusion. Furthermore, every person in Greville had taken part in the defense of the village. No emergency could allow the same number to start in pursuit of the captors and captives, for to leave the settlement defenseless would be to invite the destruction of ten times the number who were now imperiled.

As nearly as Linden could calculate, the settlers could send about twenty to the rescue. They would be true and tried men, capable of doing all that could be done by any equal number of frontiersmen, but there was no glossing over the fact that they could not help the imprisoned ones.

Was it strange that in his perplexity and

despair the hopes of Linden gradually came to center on one man! Such was the fact, for with the conviction that force was worse than useless, and that strategy alone could avail, who so likely to succeed as Deerfoot the Shawanoe.

"Where is he?" muttered Linden. "His home is not so many miles away that he could not pass the intervening distance in a few hours; he must have seen the smoke and heard the guns, and he is sure to be on hand. Yet I saw nothing of him during the fighting; it may be that he is on some distant task that will keep him absent for a long time."

Had the pioneer only known that Deerfoot at that moment was within a hundred yards of that very spot; that he had been the means of rescuing Fred Linden and Terry Clark from the Indians; that he had noted the movements of the withdrawing Winnebagoes, and that the wonderful brain of the Shawanoe was busy conjuring up some means of giving aid to those whom he loved—why, Linden would have felt some slight hope, even though it should rest upon such a frail foundation.

But for the present the pioneer could not

know it, and when a few minutes later the march was resumed, it was with the belief on his part that neither he nor any one of his companions would ever see their homes and loved ones again.

CHAPTER XIV.

"WHAT THEN SHALL BE DONE?"

IT may sound as if the pioneers were unfeeling when it is stated that before the sun reached the meridian on the day of the attack of the Winnebagoes, every one of the whites who had fallen was laid away in the grave, reverently covered up, and their intimate relatives were among those deeply interested in the project of rescuing Linden and his companions.

"It's a most serious matter," said the missionary, Griffiths, addressing about two-thirds of the settlers, including a few women and children, who had gathered in the block-house to talk over the question of the rescue. "The Winnebagoes, who fought harder than I have ever known them to do before, have carried off Mr. Linden, his wife and daughter, and the daughter of Mr. Bourne there, whose heart,

as well as that of his wife, is almost broken. I must also include Mr. Grubbens among the prisoners."

"If it were only *he* we could spare him," remarked Hardin in a voice which the missionary did not hear, but to which those who did hear responded by nods of their heads.

"It seems to me that thar's but the one thing to do," said Bowlby in his blunt way.

"What's that?" asked several.

"Follow the varmints as fast as we can, and or the first chance sail in and wipe 'em out or get wiped out ourselves."

"There wouldn't be any 'or' about it," commented the missionary, with a faint smile, "for to attack four times our number of Winnebagoes in the woods, which is their own chosen fighting ground, could only end in the destruction of almost every one of us."

"Wall, that disposes of my plan," said Bowlby; "and since I hain't got any other, I'll set down and take a chaw."

He sauntered back toward the door, where he deliberately seated himself on one of the long, rough wooden benches that served the

worshipers on Sunday and the children during week days. With his big strong white teeth he wrenched off an enormous piece, leaned his rifle against the side of the building near him, flung one leg over the other, and was prepared to listen to what the rest had to say.

"The dominie is right," said Hardin, referring to the good man by the affectionate title he generally received; "nothing would please the Winnebagoes more than to have us try such a thing. I believe that one reason why they stopped among the hills up yonder to bury their dead was to tempt us to attack them. We couldn't spare enough men to make it safe; the dominie is right."

Nobody said anything until Bowlby, raising his head as though he were looking over a fence, addressed the chairman, as he may be called, his words receiving attention, for his well-known bravery and woodcraft merited such respect.

"Since the dominie is right—as I'm ready to own he is oftener than I am—and my plan is all wrong, I'll be obleeged if some one will tell us what to do."

All eyes were turned upon the tall, spare, white-haired figure standing at the other end of the room, just as he had stood so many times when breaking the Bread of Life to his hearers.

"Since force is out of the question, we must do one of two things, buy the captives back by giving some big ransom for them or gain them by strategy. I see no hope for the latter and very little for the former. If there was but a single prisoner we might secure him or her by some cunning exploit, but nothing less than a miracle could gain five of them."

"What can we give in the way of ransom?" asked Bourne, the father of the missing Molly, as he walked back and forth too unstrung to keep quiet. "It is strange that while they got five of our people we did not take a single prisoner."

"You know," explained the Moravian, "that an Indian as a rule doesn't surrender, for to him that is a more fearful fate than to die fighting. Still I believe we would have got a good number as an offset to our friends, had the chance been given us; but, as you

know, the Winnebagoes withdrew directly after the capture and the opportunity was lost."

"So let's stop talking about *that*," said Bourne; "what can we give in the way of ransom or exchange?"

"We can give horses, cows, blankets, guns, ammunition and other things that the Indians are fond of, though it will take a good lot of them."

James Bowlby sprang to his feet half angry.

"What's the use of talkin'? You all know that nothing like that will work at all. Shall I tell you why? S'pose you gathered all the blankets and cows and horses and guns and stuff that we could spare and offered it to the varmints for our folks, and the Injins should say they would make the trade? How would you do it? Thar ain't a Winnebago this side of the Rocky Mountains that would trust himself to bring in the captives and git the goods, and maybe he wouldn't be such a big fool after all to fight shy of us.

"Then is thar any body here that's willing to trust *them*?" demanded Bowlby, looking

round in the faces of his friends, none of whom made answer. "You can't get up any plan that they wouldn't cheat you on. They would take all the goods and stuff you wanted to trade, and then they would scoop in every person. By that time they would have half of us. Then we could send the other half and they could scoop them too. Then they would have us all and we could settle down among the lodges up country and they could stay here, and things would be topsy turvy all around and the mischief generally to pay."

Bowlby talked fast and the picture he drew was so bewildering that several smiled, including even the missionary himself.

"Four years ago," said Mr. Griffiths, becoming more serious than usual, as if remorseful because he had shown levity on such an occasion, "you yourself were ransomed with another for Black Bear, the chieftain of the Winnebagoes."

"You are right," Bowlby hastened to say, "but that little business was managed by a master of art, which his name is Deerfoot, and if thar's any body here that thinks he knows

one quarter as much as that handsome young chap, he is respectfully invited to step outside, whar I'll learn him different."

The door of the block-house was wide open. Most of the people inside were looking in that direction, for Bowlby, as you will recall, had seated himself near the entrance, when the figure of an Indian appeared. He was wrapped around by a long blanket and his face was daubed with vari-covered paint, just as were the countenances of the Winnebagoes, to whom nearly every one in the building believed the visitor belonged.

Stepping softly across the threshold, the warrior moved modestly to one side, like one who was seeking to shrink from observation. He did not speak, but looked up the room at the missionary, as if wondering what it all meant. The group within the block-house were astounded, for had there ever been such temerity? Here was a member of the hated tribe, which had spread death and anguish through the settlement, actually placing himself in the power of the outraged people! Not only had the main body encamped within sight

of Greville, but, finding they were undisturbed, they had become daring enough to send one of their number into the village itself!

"Thar's one thing sartin!" called out Bowlby, stepping in front of the open door, so as to bar the flight of the Indian: "We've got *one* prisoner, though whether he's worth a gun flint or not isn't sartin till we examine—"

The impulsive pioneer was moving toward the visitor, every one else watching him, when the Indian smiled. Something in the expression of his face caused Bowlby to stop, and look inquiringly at the missionary. The latter was quietly laughing.

Bowlby turned again, and stared at the painted warrior.

"Great thunder!" he exclaimed the next minute, "if that isn't Deerfoot himself!"

The arrival of the very person whom all desired to see, threw the little assembly into confusion. Griffiths, the missionary, was the only one who recognized him when he stepped within the door: he had seen his young friend in similar disguise before.

There was an instant crowding around the
J

Shawanoë, every one insisting on shaking hands, while the demonstrative Bowlby slapped him on the shoulder, and was as delighted as a schoolboy over his first day's vacation.

"*Now* thar'll be something done," said he, "we've got a chap here who knows more about every thing than all of you don't know about nothin'. Give him fresh air; don't crowd so hard, or you'll make him mad, and he'll take a few scalps to cool his fevered brow."

The flurry quickly passed off, Deerfoot answering the many questions asked him in his own diffident way. His listeners were not surprised to learn from him that in his distant cabin he had detected signs the night before which caused him uneasiness. He knew that a large party of Winnebagoes were in the neighborhood, but he hardly believed they meditated an attack on the settlement. His supposition was that they had started upon, or were returning from a long hunt, or that they had some thought of moving their lodges, and had gone to "spy out the land."

He furthermore supposed that the proximity of the red men would be discovered by the set-

blers in time for them to guard against surprise : therein, you will note, he committed an error, which was disastrous in the extreme.

Deerfoot's misgivings increased during the night, so that he resolved to look into the matter himself. He painted his face, slung a blanket about his shoulders, kissed his wife and little Paul good-by, and started for the settlement.

He had a long distance to go, as you have already learned, but calling into play his marvelous fleetness of foot he reached the rocky hills in time to perform good service for Fred Linden and Terry Clark.

It was a dreadful shock to the youths to learn what had taken place during their brief absence, and when some minutes later, Terry and Fred walked into the large building, the eyes of both showed they had been weeping, and it required the utmost self-control of Fred to maintain his composure while receiving the sympathy of his friends.

All felt, however, that it was time for action rather than words. Deerfoot had lingered in the vicinity of the Winnebagoes until they

resumed their tramp northward, and indeed had followed them a short way. He reported that there were seventy-three in all, and they were among the finest warriors of the tribe. He did not hesitate to say that it was idle to think of rescuing the captives by means of force: such an attempt would be sure to result in disaster, not only to the rescuers but to those who were left behind.

The Winnebagoes would be quick to detect the scheme and, dividing their own party would send back enough to overwhelm the settlement before the rescuers could return to the help of their friends.

"What then shall be done?" was the question that came to the lips of each one, as he fixed his eyes upon the Shawanoe.

And once more did Deerfoot realize the inconvenience of bearing a reputation beyond his power to sustain at all times. Probably all, including the missionary himself, were confident that the Indian would propose a plan of which none of them had thought, but which was almost sure of success.

But they were mistaken; he shook his head

and said he did not know what was best to do. He might be able to offer something after awhile, but he could not then.

"Deerfoot wants *ten men*," said he, suddenly looking up as though an idea had struck him; "can he have them?"

His hearers clamored so ardently to be among the number that he smiled, recoiled a step or two and waved them back.

"May Deerfoot take those of his brothers whom he wants?" he asked, looking around in the eager faces.

"Yes, yes, yes, so you take *me*, and *me*, and *me*," was the boisterous response from them all.

CHAPTER XV.

"SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG."

THE scene which followed was a striking one. Deerfoot had suddenly become the "chairman," against whose decisions there was no appeal.

Looking calmly around in the eager faces, the very first man whom he indicated as a member of the little band of volunteers was Griffiths the missionary. Some may have wondered at the choice, but later events proved that the Shawanoe knew his man.

The second was Bowlby, the third, Hardin, the fourth Fred Linden and the fifth Terry Clark. Deerfoot seemed to hesitate about taking Jonas Bourne, for you can understand how the grief of the father, who was so anxious to recover his daughter, was likely to warp his judgment at critical times. But perhaps Deerfoot relied upon the coolness of his companions, or he may have been touched

by the pleading look in the parent's face, for Bourne stepped to one side as the sixth member of the rescue party.

The remaining four were quickly selected, and only a few minutes were taken for preparation, for little preparation indeed was needed. Those who had friends to bid good by did so. The guns were looked after, a supply of balls and ammunition provided for each, and, within twenty minutes after the party was made up, it filed across the clearing and entered the woods to the northward.

The gallant pioneers, under the direction of the young Shawanoe, had started to rescue their friends. No one could tell whether they would succeed or fail, and certain it is that no one, not even the dusky leader, dreamed of the strange events that were to follow.

No one could guess what the plan of Deerfoot was, if, indeed, he had formed any definite plan. About the only thing certain was that he would depend on strategy, as he had depended so many times before when trying to help his friends.

Most of the members of the party partook

of food before starting, while others carried some lunch with them: not that any one feared he would not be able to bring down all that he wanted in the way of game, but you can readily see that there were likely to be occasions when the report of a rifle would be dangerous to our friends.

From the settlement, the trailers went directly to the rocky hills where Fred and Terry had their stirring interview with the Winnebagoes. Since the main party were known to be a considerable distance in advance, the progress of the pursuers up to the point named was somewhat straggling. But on the elevation a halt was made, and the young Shawanoe laid down the law to the rest.

He put forward no claim to the leadership of the company, some of whom were old enough to be his father; but he insisted that he should always keep as far in advance as he believed right, and that no step or movement that could effect the result of the enterprise should be taken without consultation with him.

It might be set down as certain that emergencies would arise when such consultations could not be had, but the general summary of Deerfoot's requirements was put by Terry Clark in his characteristic fashion.

"Deerfut wants ye all to understand that he rejicts wid scorn the idaya of his leadin' such a fine set of gintlemen as this, but at the same time he desires ye to bear in mind that he is the boss, and any chap that wants to dispute the same can step forward and have his head cracked. How far am I wrong, Mr. Bowlby?"

"You think the same as the rest of us," said the pioneer, with a laugh.

Deerfoot's next proceeding was to acquaint his friends with the signals that were to be used. Bowlby, Hardin and the missionary gave much aid in this, and in briefer time than would be supposed a full understanding was reached. Griffiths and Deerfoot had been often together, so that little instruction was needed by the former.

Although it was high noon when the halt was made on the elevation, and although it

was known that the Winnebagoes were a long distance in advance, the Shawanoe showed no disposition to hasten his pursuit. He took care to keep his friends hidden from the view of any stragglers who might be in the neighborhood. It can hardly be believed that it was necessary that such precautions should be taken, but no doubt the youth was wise in requiring it as a means of discipline.

"Let my brothers wait until Deefoot comes back," said he, abruptly departing at the moment when every one supposed that the pursuit was to be resumed, or rather begun.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Hardin, looking inquiringly at his friends, who were grouped around him.

"He seems to be uneasy over something," replied the missionary, gazing in the direction taken by the youth.

"Where has he gone?" persisted Hardin.

"I think," replied Bowlby, "that he's made some discovery that don't suit him and he has gone off where he can look into it a little further; and like enough he wants to pray over it."

"I believe you are right," said the good Moravian, "though Deerfoot does so much praying before he goes upon the war-path that he rarely has to stop to commune with God when it is likely to cause any delay in proceedings. I have seen him close his eyes in prayer when dashing through the woods; for he has the same privilege that you and I have of communing with our Heavenly Father at all times."

This was said in such a cheery manner and with such a glowing face that it was the furthest remove possible from cant. Every person who heard the words knew that the good old missionary preached eloquently by his own example, which is the most effective sermon that is within the power of all of us to preach.

"He is the most extraordinary young man I ever knew," remarked the missionary, gazing once more toward the point where the Shawanoe had disappeared, as though he expected his return; "he has a mind whose brilliancy would attract remark, if any of us possessed it, while his skill in the way of running, leap-

ing, shooting, and every thing that requires the highest possible training of the senses, is incredible. I suppose that if any one should attempt to write and print the facts about Deerfoot, he would not be believed."

(I am afraid the good man spoke the truth.)

When several more minutes passed without bringing back their absent guide, the missionary took the liberty of stealing through the wood in the direction taken by him.

This was altogether contrary to orders, but it may have been that the missionary presumed a little upon his years, and the peculiar relation he bore to Deerfoot. Be that as it may, he had not far to go when he caught sight of the young warrior standing on a rock elevated so far above the immediate surroundings that his view extended several miles to the northward.

He was leaning on his rifle and shading his eyes with one hand, while he was studying the horizon of the clear, sunlit sky before him. Noting his keen scrutiny, the missionary, whose vision was still excellent, looked in the same direction; but, though he used his eyes

the best he could, he was unable to discover that in which his young friend was so interested.

"He sees something," was the conclusion, "but what it is is more than I can tell. If he thinks we ought to know, he will tell us when he comes back, and if he don't think we ought to know, it will be useless to question him."

Not wishing to offend the Shawanoe, the preacher quietly withdrew and rejoined his friends, to whom he told what he had seen. He was none too quick to avoid Deerfoot, who came directly after him, stopping a few steps away, and looking down to the ground as if in deep thought. He said nothing, but he was unusually disturbed.

"I tell you," whispered Fred Linden, "*something has gone wrong!*"

He was right, as speedily became apparent.

CHAPTER XVI

"HIS SIGNAL WAS HEARD A MOMENT LATER."

STANDING on the elevated rock and looking off to the northward, the keen eyes of Deerfoot the Shawanoe rested on a certain spot in the horizon where neither you nor I would have seen any thing. He observed a thin, spiral column of smoke climbing upward and dissolving so fast in the air above that the wonder was how he was able to make it out.

Then, as the same wonderful eyes ranged along the dim, hazy line that marked the top of the forest, to a point a couple of miles away, they discovered a still fainter column of vapor which slowly rose above the trees, and like the other, was gradually absorbed in the clear atmosphere.

It was these two sights which disturbed Deerfoot and threatened to overturn his plans before he could put them in execution. What

he feared was that the Winnebagoes, having broken into two parties, had also apportioned their captives between them. You will see that if such was the case, it would compel Deerfoot in turn to divide his small company. Two squads of pioneers would have to follow two much more numerous bodies of Indians. In other words, the task that our friends had entered upon was doubled, with a greater proportional increase of difficulty and danger.

The Shawanoe did not hesitate to make known his perplexity, when Bowlby, with the freedom of an old friend, laid his hand on his shoulder, and asked him to let them know what the matter was.

"What's the odds?" said the trapper, after the explanation was made: "if one of the sets of varmints has taken the Grubbens, and the other the rest of the prisoners, why, we'll let Hank look out for himself and our job will become that much easier."

"Where's the harrum?" asked Terry, who, now that Fred Linden was so oppressed, felt that he must speak for both; "Deerfoot can

take charge of one party and folly up whichever he chooses, while several of us will do the same wid the ither set of spalpeens."

"Deerfoot would take one party, but who would lead the other ?" asked Bourne.

"Excoos me blushes," replied Terry, "but I'm too modest to call out his name before yees all."

Even Deerfoot smiled at the quaint fellow, who showed so little respect for time or place in uttering his whimsicalities.

"If we find it necessary to divide, there must be some one in charge of the other company," was the suggestive remark of the missionary.

"And it shall be my father," said Deerfoot, whose dark eyes glowed with affection as he looked upon the beaming face before him; "but it may be that the Winnebagoes have not separated; it may be another party; we shall soon know."

"Then thar's but the one thing to do," said Bowlby, "and that's to find out; and the only way to find out is to pitch in."

"My brother speaks wisdom," observed

Deerfoot, as if catching the inspiration of his ardor; "let them follow me."

He moved down the slope at a rapid walk, avoiding the rocks and obstructions with a skill which the others found hard to equal. The tall Moravian kept close to his heels, as he had done so many times in threading his way through the forest, while the others strung along in Indian file.

Now nothing could be much easier for Deerfoot than to find the answer to the question that troubled him. Since the withdrawing Winnebagoes were too powerful to hold the white men in fear, they would make no haste on that account, and inasmuch as their captives included three females, they would be obliged to moderate their pace to suit them. It followed, therefore, that the eleven men hurrying over their trail would have no difficulty in overtaking the Indians before they could travel far.

It was utterly out of the power of such a large body of men as the war party of Indians to hide their trail, and there had been no thought of any such attempt by the warriors.

The pursuers, therefore, advanced with as much certainty as if they were following a beaten path, as indeed may be said to have been the case.

Deerfoot made no mention of the fact, but more than once he discerned, among the multitudinous footprints, those of one or two of the captives. He was quite sure that the Winnebagoes meant to take them all the way back to the villages, and that no harm was likely to be done them on the road, except it might become necessary to prevent their escape.

Despite the deliberate pace of the Winnebagoes, they had gained so much start that the pursuers were forced to a long tramp before they could overtake them. Since the Indians had buried their dead and held the ceremonies among the rocky hills just north of the settlement, Deerfoot hardly expected them to make a halt before night. Nevertheless they had done so, resuming their march while the afternoon was still young.

The sun was half way down the sky when our friends reached a small stream, no more

than a dozen feet wide. The water was so transparent that the bottom was seen all the way across, though the depth was considerable.

The Indians, who are not very fond of water, had overcome the difficulty by leaping across, the jump not being a difficult one for any of them. The whites did the same, starting from a slight distance back, running a few steps and then bounding over. Deerfoot did not take an extra step, but standing close to the water, went over as lightly as a greyhound.

Terry Clark indulged in such an extensive start, that he was pretty well tired out by the time he reached the edge of the stream. Nevertheless he went across, though he would have fallen backward into the water had not the hand of Deerfoot been stretched out in time to save him.

"How was it they got over without wetting their feet?" asked the missionary, alluding to the female captives.

"I know that both mother and Edith could easily jump that," said Fred Linden, "and since there are no signs of any one stepping into the water, and there is no bridge by which

they could have walked over, why they have leaped as did the others."

"It would have been a small matter for Molly," said Jonas Bourne with a sigh, in which just a little tinge of pride at the athletic skill of his daughter could be detected.

"That has been the way it was done then," said the missionary, compressing his lips and nodding his head after the manner of one that has just heard a convincing argument.

"Let my brothers wait here," added Deer-foot, who seemed to have discovered something of interest a short distance beyond where the halt was made.

The upper bank of the stream wore such an odd look that it was noticed by all. You know that an Indian always leaves a faint trail, when passing through the forest, but since all of the Winnebagoes took the leap across the stream, each landed on the other side with a force that caused his moccasins to sink so deep into the soft earth that the imprint was plain. Over a hundred indentations were marked.

"I wonder what it is *this* time," said Hardin, changing his gaze from the imprints to

the point in advance where the Shawanoe had vanished; "he seems always to be finding something."

"If the Winnebagoes have separated, as he suspects, it must have been not far from this spot," said Mr. Griffiths, "and I suppose he is looking for evidence on that question."

"And he'll find it too," was the declaration of Bowlby, who never grew tired of praising the Shawanoe; for Deerfoot's services some four years before had won the hearts of the hunters and trappers. "Jonas," he added, turning toward the father of one of the captive girls, "I don't know how it is, but since Deerfoot has taken charge of this business, I sort of feel as though we're going to win."

"I would like to feel as you do," replied the parent, with another sigh, "but I can't see how it is possible."

"And I can't either, but that don't make any difference to Deerfoot, you know. He can see things that we would miss with a dozen pair of spectacles."

"We know how skillful he is in all the ways of the woods," added the dejected Fred Lin-

den, "but no matter how wise he may be, there are many, many problems which he can not solve, and I'm afraid this is one."

"There can't be any doubt of it, so far as *we're* concerned, but," sturdily persisted the hunter, "that don't apply to Deerfoot. Now, when me and that red-headed Irish lad thar was in the hands of the Winnebagoes about four years ago, who would have dared to say that we would ever git out agin? The chap that said thar was the least chance for us would have been a fool, but what does Deerfoot do?" demanded the eloquent Bowlby, spreading out the palm of his hand, like an orator illustrating some point in his speech. "Yes, what does he do? He walks over to the hills, scoops in Black Bear, and trades him for us two. The varmints would have give a thousand Terrys, if they had 'em, for Black Bear, and then would have got their chief mighty cheap," he added, with a sly look at the youth, who was quick to say:

"If ye'll mind that time there was not a word iver said about an exchange so long as the only white man wid the spalpeens was the

one wid a lame fut. Deerfut would not insult the intilligence of the bowld warriors by axin' only sich a chap for a great chief. So he arranged that mesilf should skip over the line, after which there was a basis for a respectable trade to be worked up."

A laugh followed the reply of Terry, and there was a general looking for Deerfoot to come back. He was not in sight, but he was heard from a moment later.

CHAPTER XVII.

"COME, BOYS, I'M READY !"

THE cautious signal which reached the ears of the listening pioneers was recognized as a call for them to go forward. Deerfoot had found what he was seeking, or had learned that it could not be found.

The missionary walked rapidly, the others close behind him. They crossed the broad clearing, and a short distance beyond caught sight of the Shawanoe, standing erect and looking expectantly toward them. Pointing down to the ground, he said :

"The Winnebagoes parted company there ; one-half went *that* way and one-half *that* way."

With his hand he indicated two widely diverging paths, one leading toward the camp-fire on the right, and the other toward that on the left. A glance at the ground showed that

the statement of the Shawanoe was one whose truth was self-evident.

"That is all well enough," said Hardin, "and it is no more than we expected after what you told us, but the main question hasn't been answered : what about the prisoners?"

"How can you expect Deerfoot to answer that question until he has followed up each party and found out for himself?" asked Bourne, with a reproving look at the questioner.

But that was the very query that Deerfoot could answer truthfully. He discovered the division of the war party of Winnebagoes, after which he set out to find what disposition was made of the captives.

To do this compelled him to advance a considerable distance along each trail in turn, while he scrutinized the ground for the signs that would answer the question just asked him. Sooner than would have been thought, he found the knowledge he was seeking.

"With *them*," said he, pointing along the path made by the company that pursued almost a direct northerly course, "went the father of

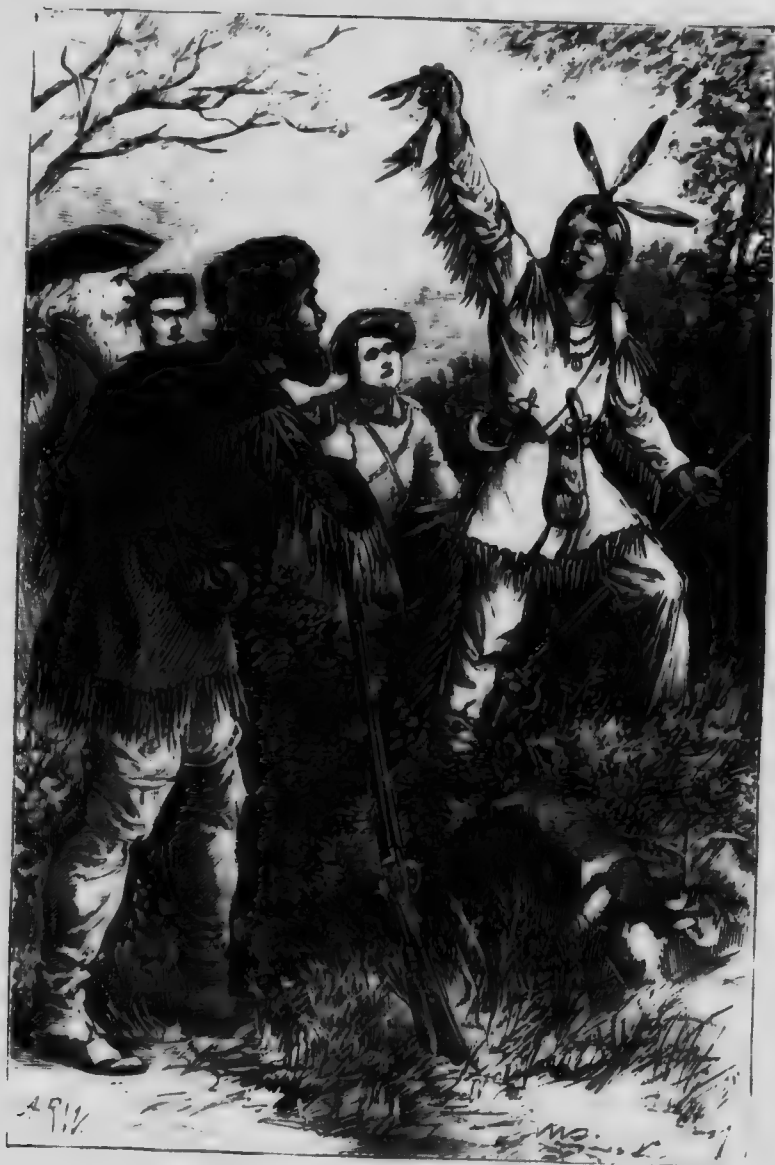
my brother, and his mother, and his sister ; with them," he added, pointing more to the westward, "went the daughter of my brother" (looking at Bourne,) "and the other man."

The hearers stared at Deerfoot in astonishment, most of them disbelieving, or at least doubting what he had said.

Now it may not strike you as very wonderful that the Shawanoe learned from examining the trail that one man and two ladies had taken a certain course, while a man and another lady had gone with the other party ; but you might well wonder by what possible means the young warrior was able to identify the captives.

There were only two of the listeners who did not believe there was a possibility of Deerfoot's mistake : they were the missionary and James Bowlby. The former knew that his young friend would not utter a falsehood, and the latter was sure Deerfoot could do any thing that he set out to do.

"That's all very well," said Hardin with a doubting smile, "but I will be much obliged to you, Deerfoot, if you will explain how you were able to tell that the footprints you saw



"That was torn from the dress of Molly."

(Page 171.)

were not made by Edith Linden instead of Molly Bourne?"

The Shawanoe held up a small shred of homespun — such material as composed the dress of many of our great-grandmothers. It was of darker color than usual. Without a word the warrior handed it to Jonas Bourne.

The latter examined it with the minutest care.

"My gracious!" he exclaimed, pale with excitement; "that was torn from the dress of Molly!"

"Where did you get it?" asked Hardin.

Deerfoot by way of answer pointed to the northwest—that is, in the direction taken by the second company of Winnebagoes.

"What did I tell you?" demanded the enthusiastic Bowlby, oblivious of the fact that he hadn't told any thing; "didn't I say there wasn't any thing that that Deerfoot can't do? After this I want it understood that whoever insinuates any thing of the kind—why, him or me has got to die, and I don't think it'll be me."

"I was puzzled to understand by what means he learned the truth," said the mis-

sionary, "but when Deerfoot says any thing it must not be doubted."

"Having found out that much," continued Hardin, who was highly pleased with the exploit of their friend, "it was an easy matter to learn that it was Hank Grubbens who was in the company of Molly Bourne."

"He doesn't place his foot on the ground like the father of my brother, but walks straight, as does an Indian."

Every one understood the allusion of Deerfoot. Hank Grubbens when walking kept his feet pointed straight forward, while Linden followed the usual practice of the white man and turned his toes outward: there was no mistake, therefore, on that point.

"The Winnebagoes having divided," said the missionary, "it follows that we must do the same."

Deerfoot nodded his head.

"Let us lose no time," said Bourne, who became more agitated than before; "every minute has its value. Pick out your men, Deerfoot, and let us be off; we are doing wrong to idle away our time."

The father's solicitude for his daughter excused, in the eyes of all, the words, most of which should have come only from Deerfoot himself.

"My father will be the leader," said he, pointing to the missionary, "and with him will you go, and you, and you."

He indicated Bourne, and the four members of the company whom I have not thought it necessary to introduce to you by name. This left Hardin, Bowlby, Deerfoot, Fred Linden and Terry Clark as the members of the company who were to take the other trail.

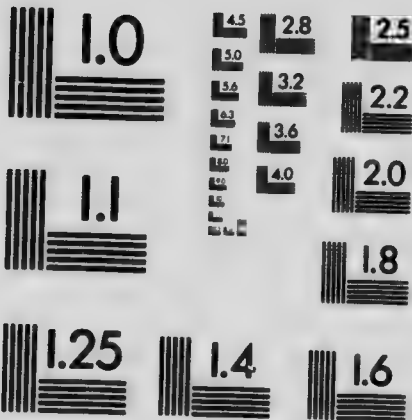
Deerfoot drew the missionary aside, and, despite the impatience of Bourne, they held an earnest conversation lasting several minutes. They talked in such low tones that no one else could hear any thing said by them. The Shawanoe was doubtless giving his venerable friend some instructions, for nothing could have been more appropriate than such a counsel.

Mr. Griffiths was seen to nod his head several times, while he spoke earnestly, as if in fullest accord with the dusky youth whom he loved



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so well. At the end of the interview, the good man grasped the hand of Deerfoot and shook it warmly. Then, turning toward his waiting friends, he said :

“Come boys, I’m ready !”

Those who were about to part company waved each other good-by, and almost immediately were lost to sight.

One of the results between the missionary and Deerfoot was shown by the former a few minutes later, when the leader, turning about, halted his followers and said several words to them.

He reminded them of the difficulties ahead—so great indeed that he saw no way, except by a special interposition of Providence, that they could be overcome. He said that from time immemorial the custom had been that when a party of Indians ran off with a captive, his friends would pursue the captors in the hope of retaking the prisoner.

Now it was easy enough to *pursue* the Winnebagoes—a single man might do that—but when it came to retaking the lost ones, that was another matter. If any person could show

how six men could outwit and overcome five times as many, he was willing to be instructed.

The missionary intimated his hopes by saying that he looked for an indication from his Heavenly Father. If He wished the captives rescued, He would open the way ; if He did not, then He would not give His help ; but whether He did or did not, He did all things well, blessed be His name !

And then while standing before his listening friends the missionary raised his hands, and in a low voice prayed to Heaven for guidance in the crisis before them. The others bowed their heads and joined, for I tell you, my young friends, if you do not feel like calling upon God to-day, the hour is coming when you will want to call upon no one else.

The Moravian was frank to tell Jonas Bourne that his chief misgiving was because of him, and Deerfoot had not hesitated to express the same fear. While Bourne was a good woodman and pioneer, yet his natural nervousness was so intensified by his anxiety about his daughter, that he was likely at any moment to be betrayed into an indiscretion

that would be fatal to all. Unless he would promise to obey the leader under all circumstances, he could not bear them company any longer.

The father was earnest in his promise to follow every direction of the missionary, who was not entirely relieved by the pledge, even though he knew it was sincere.

It took very little time to complete these preliminaries, as they may be called, when Griffiths resumed the pursuit. Of course he acted as leader, the others following in Indian file. There was no attempt to hide their trail, nor was there much care put forth in their advance. The footprints of the Winnebagoes were so plainly shown that it took no effort to keep them in sight.

The advance, while in a general north-westerly direction, was through the primeval forest. There was no path or trail, except that which had been made by the withdrawing Indians. The surface was comparatively even, the woods were quite open, though the exuberant vegetation of spring often shut off the view from any point within a hundred feet.

The rocky regions having been left behind, the progress of the little party was as easy as could have been desired. They were in want of no food, and since nothing was to prevent them making good progress, it is hardly necessary to say that they advanced faster than a usual walk. This continued for about an hour, when the first of the strange incidents I have set out to tell took place.

CHAPTER XVIII

"IT IS GAUMA!"

NEVER in all his life was Jonas Bourne so startled as he was at the end of the first hour of the pursuit under the leadership of the missionary.

The latter, like Deerfort, not only put himself in front of his followers, but he was so far ahead that at times he was out of sight. These disappearances, as they may be called, lasted no more than a minute or two, and therefore caused no question on the part of his friends.

The next in order was Bourne, the other four always keeping close to him. Griffiths wished the father to be within call at all times.

Bourne was walking at a rapid gait, and had lost sight of the missionary when he suddenly became aware that the good man had collided with something or somebody. He heard a

threshing of leaves and a crashing of undergrowth which showed that a fierce struggle was going on.

"What the mischief can *that* mean?" asked Bourne, running forward with the others at his heels.

The amazement of the little party was increased if possible, when it was seen that the Moravian, instead of grappling with some wild animal, as was supposed, was closed in deadly embrace with an Indian warrior.

One of the most striking features of what was certainly an extraordinary struggle was its silence. Neither of the combatants spoke a word, but, to use a not inappropriate expression, each attended strictly to business.

It looked as if the Moravian and the redskin, on catching sight of each other, had flung down their rifles and leaped forward like a couple of panthers. Such was the fact indeed, though the missionary, after throwing aside his gun, made no attempt to draw his knife.

The truth was that the meeting was an utter surprise to both. Griffiths was moving with more stealth than his friends, when in passing

around a thick clump of undergrowth he almost ran against a Winnebago warrior who was coming from the other direction.

Seeing that a collision was inevitable, the red man made a fierce bound at the white-haired old gentleman.

You have been told enough about the latter to believe that a person who rashly assaulted him was likely to commit a serious blunder. The pioneers of the West at three-score were often as vigorous and active as you will be at two-thirds of that age.

Among the numerous people that made the blunder I have spoken of was the particular red man who set upon the missionary with such ardor. The wrist of the hand that was raised to strike was grasped with a grip which could not be twisted loose, and the arm then encircled the waist of the warrior lifted him so high in the air that his moccasins kicked nothing but vacancy in their effort to find a resting-place.

Down went the two on the ground, the Indian under; but he was one of the strongest of the nine warriors who made the valiant

attack that I have described elsewhere, and the Moravian was quick to perceive that he had closed with the toughest antagonist he had ever met.

Having wrenched the knife from the hand of the Winnebago, the combatants were without any weapons except those of nature. The savage had his tomahawk, but before he could draw that, it was worked out of the girdle about his waist, and the wrestlers rolled away from it.

The missionary had hardly got his man down, when the latter turned him like a flash, and brought himself on top. Even in the exciting moment the good man admired the skill with which this was done; but he knew a trick or two himself, and the redskin toppled over before he could brace his body to resist the shock. The Moravian, however, did not place him fairly beneath, but the struggle for mastery remained an even thing for a full minute.

"What's the use of standing by and allowing this to go on!" called Jonas Bourne, to whom it seemed a sin to refuse a helping hand

to their friend ; " I can end this bout in short order."

He advanced to seize, or rather to strike the Winnebago, when Griffiths, who amid the terrific swirl saw his intention, shouted :

" Keep off ! I want to learn whether my strength is failing ! Wait till I ask you for help ! "

" Well I'll be hanged ! " muttered the disgusted Bourne, stepping back among his friends ; " I suppose after the redskin tears his scalp off he will remark that he has no objection to our giving him a lift."

But it did not take the Moravian long to prove that he was the better man of the two. Despite the Indian's most desperate efforts he gradually forced him downward until he was once more astride of him, and the red man was made helpless.

Since Griffiths and the warrior were old acquaintances, it followed that a mutual recognition took place the moment they flew at one another's throats. Though they did not speak, their eyes met in that fierce conflict, and the words were not needed.

As soon as it became apparent to the men standing around that the missionary had conquered, they stepped back so as to give him full play to do as he chose.

"I suppose he will take good care not to hurt him," growled Bourne, whose hatred of the Indians was intense enough to shut out all mercy from his heart. "Likely enough he will preach him a sermon, and then let him go."

While it can not be said that the good Moravian was weak enough to do any thing like that, he certainly did show a kindness to the vanquished foe which would not have been shown by any of the spectators.

I have already told you that the missionary and the warrior were not strangers. In wandering back and forth along the frontier and through the miles of wilderness, the old man formed as wide an acquaintance among the Indians as he did among those of his own race. Like Roger Williams, of colonial times, he went where no other white man dared go, sleeping among the savages at the very time when they were making ready to go upon their war path.

You know why he was treated with such consideration; a good man commands the respect even of those who are bad. The missionary had never been known to speak with a "double tongue," nor had he wronged a human being. But at the same time you do not need to be told that he belonged to the church militant, and when necessary could fight as well as any of the pioneers.

Among the numerous acquaintances of the missionary was a warrior known as Gauma, or The Serpent. His bravery, skill, remarkable activity and strength, gave him fame among his own people. From the ridge pole of his wigwam fluttered more ghastly trophies of his prowess than were displayed by any other Winnebago brave. He had been named for chieftain more than once, second in rank only to Black Bear, but he refused, and won the friendship of Ap-to-to by advocating his choice.

The missionary had always felt a special interest in The Serpent because he had shown an unusual concern in what was told him about the Bread of Life. He listened atten-

tively to what was said by the preacher and several times asked questions. More than once the missionary believed that an impression had been made on the warrior; but, alas, it did not last. When the war dance took place Gauma threw himself into the exciting ceremonies with the wildest abandon of all, and none was braver than he upon the war path. You have learned of the daring work of the little band which burst through the door of George Linden's house and made off with the five prisoners.

The leader of the band was Gauma, or The Serpent, but even in the delirium of the fight he would have offered no harm to the missionary had the chance been given him. There was one man whom he held in reverence, and that was he. Still he was willing that in the furious fight then going on, he should take the chances with the rest of the pioneers.

That he did take the chances you need not be told and it proved to be somewhat worse for the assailant than for himself.

The Indian had not uttered a syllable during the savage wrestling bout, and the only

words spoken by the Moravian were those forbidding Jonas Bourne to interfere. The conqueror waited till he had his man secure against all struggling, and then looking down in his flashing eyes, he uttered the single word "*Gauma!*"

And the warrior, looking up from the ground, said in his native tongue, and without a tremor in his voice,

"It is Gauma! He asks no mercy from his father!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"NOW HE IS CONQUERED."

AFTER what I have told you of the reverence which the Winnebago warrior, known as Gauma, or The Serpent, felt for the missionary, you may wonder how it was that the savage bounded so fiercely at him with drawn knife. The Indian was like a boy suddenly caught doing something wrong: overwhelmed by a feeling of shame he became desperate, and fought with ten-fold savagery. His resolution was to drive his knife to the heart of the man against whom he really felt no enmity, and he never strove harder to do any thing than he did to kill the Moravian.

Having failed he was ready, as he was at all times, to take the consequences. Though he knew the good man to be forgiving, he did not ask for mercy after such an attempt on his life.

But he mistook the Moravian. The latter

shifted himself and allowed the red man to rise to his feet.

"Just what I expected!" remarked Bourne with a disgusted sniff; "but I'll keep my eye on him and, if he tries any of his tricks I'll take a pop at him.

An Indian does not often show embarrassment, no matter under what circumstances he is caught, but The Serpent's awkwardness was so apparent to all, that more than one felt a sympathy for him. He stood silent with his hands hanging by his sides looking in the beaming face before him, and uncertain what to do or say, if indeed he could do or say any thing at all.

The Moravian stepped away a few paces, picked up the knife of his late combatant and holding the point toward himself bowed low and presented it to the Winnebago as if he was the conqueror to whom the missionary desired to make his surrender.

Gauma accepted it without a word or sign of acknowledgment. Manifestly he was dazed by the turn of affairs.

"Don't forget this," was the sarcastic

remark of Bourne, hurrying over to where the gun of the warrior lay on the leaves, picking it up and passing it to the Indian. Just as the latter reached out his hand for it, the settler turned toward the missionary and, with all sarcasm he could summon, asked :

"Hadn't I better raise the flint so as to help him fire at one of us ?"

Mr. Griffiths smiled and answered :

"I guess he knows how to do *that* himself ; thank you ; never mind."

By this time, though only a few moments had passed, The Serpent began to recover his poise. He thrust his knife into his girdle, and, holding his rifle in his left hand, stepped forward and extended the other to the missionary, who, I need not tell you, warmly grasped it.

"Is not the father of my father angry with his wicked son ?"

There was a strange pathos in this question. The words were uttered in the Winnebago tongue, which was as familiar to the good man as it was to the warrior himself. The voice dropped several notes, and there was a delibera-

tion in their utterance which added to their impressiveness.

Still knowing the American race as well as he did, and familiar as he was with the doings of The Serpent, Mr. Griffiths was not disarmed by the words and manner of the warrior. Hiding his own distrust, he decided not to give him his full confidence until after testing him further.

The following conversation now took place in the Winnebago tongue, my interpretation being a very liberal one, for your special benefit:

"I am grieved but not angry with my son. Winnebago, why did you raise your hand against me?"

"The Serpent is sorry, but he did not wait till he could hear what his heart said; he struck before, and then he fought to save himself from the anger of his father."

"But you had no need of doing that, for you know I wished not to harm you. However, I will not reprove you, Guama, for there is no braver warrior among your tribe than you. You are the nearest approach to Deerfoot that I ever saw; you can't equal that wonderful

youth, but you are the best of your tribe. I feel no wish to punish you, as you must know from the way I have acted, but will you, my son, answer with a single tongue the questions I want to ask?"

"The Serpent will do so?"

Guama looked directly into the eyes of the questioner, who believed that the information he was after would be truthfully given.

"Why did you, Wannebago, come back over the trail instead of staying with the other warrior?"

"It was to see whether any of the Long Knives were following us."

"How many of the captives are with your party?"

The Serpent held up two fingers, thus speaking the truth on *that* point.

"One is a squaw, she is young, and her face is bright; the other is a warrior, who stoops like an old man; his hair is the color of the leaves of the maple in autumn."

There could be no questioning the accuracy of The Serpent's statements thus far. Whi his description could have applied to Edith

Linden as well as to Molly Bourne, yet it could not be doubted that he referred to the latter. As for Hank Grubbens, that was too plain to be mistaken.

Gauma could not have suspected it, but the last replies raised him higher in the confidence of the missionary than a hundred of his pledges could have done.

"Who leads the party yonder?" asked Mr. Griffiths, pointing along the path over which the Winnebago had just come.

"The Serpent," was the proud reply, though the words were accompanied by an inclination of the head, as if making his acknowledgments to some great dignitary.

"Is it the rule among your tribe for the chief to leave them for such unimportant business as this?"

"It is the rule, my father, for the chieftain to do as he pleases," was the answer; "but The Serpent is not a chieftain; he is only a warrior like those with him."

"Who is your chief, now that Black Bear is no more?"

"There is none now, but there soon will be."

"What is his name?"

"Ap-to-to."

"Where is he?"

The Serpent pointed to the north over the course taken by the other and larger party. The probable successor of Black Bear had taken one direction, while the best warrior of the tribe led the rest by another course.

"Who divided the Winnebagoes into two companies?"

"Ap-to-to."

"Why did he do it?"

For the first time the Winnebago showed hesitation in answering; but the missionary, who was watching him closely, believed the cause was not any wish to deceive him, but rather that he was at a loss how to explain.

"Was it not, my son, that Ap-to-to thought the whites would follow and try to get the captives? Did he not think that because he divided his warriors, we would do the same, and then he would have a better chance of capturing us in turn?"

It might be hard to show wherein the striking wisdom of this step lay, but that such was

his plan was shown by The Serpent's vigorous nodding of his head, and the words several times repeated :

"My father is right."

"Well, Winnebago, he has succeeded in the first part of his scheme, that is, he has forced us to divide, though whether he will succeed in the rest is uncertain ; but I must confess that our chances of success are slight. What do your people intend to do with the captives ?"

There was no hesitation in the startling answer.

"The squaws will be given as the wives of the warriors, after the Winnebago villages are reached."

"What is to be done with the two men ?"

"They will run the gauntlet and then be burned ; Black Bear and so many of the Winnebagoes have fallen that this must be done."

Little did Jonas Bourne and the others who were listening to the conversation imagine the fearful meaning of the words just uttered by the Winnebago. Had they been able to com-

prehend them their impatience would have been changed to consternation.

"This is a dreadful fate, Winnebago, that you have named: is there no way of buying back the captives?"

The warrior dropped his eyes to the ground as if debating the question. But less than a minute passed when he slowly swayed his head from side to side: he knew of none."

"Can not they be ransomed?"

"What has my father to give?"

"Horses, cows, guns, ammunition, blankets, beads and many more things your people are fond of."

"How will they be given? The Indian and white man will not trust each other, for the white man speaks with a double tongue."

It was not strange perhaps that The Serpent should have named the very difficulty which Bowlby had spoken of with such emphasis that day in the block-house. Mutual distrust would prevent the exchange which possibly, under other circumstances, could have been effected between the red men and the whites.

"Deerfoot once arranged an exchange,

though that was some four years ago. Gauma," suddenly asked the missionary, laying his hand on the shoulder of the warrior, "won't *you* show you are my friend by helping us? For you *can* help us."

The Serpent recoiled a step, with his flashing eye fixed upon the kindly face of the missionary. For several seconds he did not speak a word. His face was seen to quiver with emotion, there was a strange twitching about his lips and, most amazing fact of all, the Moravian saw (slight though they were) tears in his eyes!

"Father," said he, bowing his head, "The Serpent was thrown on the ground and his knife taken from him, but he was not conquered; *now* he is conquered!"

CHAPTER XX.

"MY BROTHER, THERE IS HOPE."

YOU will bear in mind that the party led by Deerfoot the Shawanoe had a task exactly similar to that of the little band under the direction of Elijah Griffiths the Moravian missionary. But there was no sameness in the experience which befell each.

Less than a fourth of a mile from the spot where our friends broke into two parties Deerfoot and his companions reached another stream of water so much smaller than the one to which I have referred that it was little more than a brook that was easily crossed by every one.

After this had been done the Shawanoe stopped, and with an odd expression of countenance looked at himself as mirrored in the clear element. It was evident that he was not pleased with his appearance. He had daubed his features with paint, after the manner of

the Winnebagoes, and the thick blanket was gathered about his shoulders. You know that his object in doing this was to disguise himself, and you know too that he succeeded so well that he had been able to save Fred Linden and Terry Clark from the warriors among the hills.

Having accomplished that task in his clever fashion he was aware that the disguise could serve him no further. The exploit which he performed revealed his identity, and he was too well known to his enemies to deceive them any further.

Without a word, but with the same quizzical expression on his face, he bent down and began vigorously washing off the stuff, his friends watching his actions with no little amusement.

"I'm glad of that," was the hearty remark of Bowlby; "for a chap that is as good-looking as Deerfoot don't want to hide his purty self from his friends."

"I want ye to obsarve," said Terry, whose bubbling spirits would not keep down, "the striking resimblance which Deerfut bears to

meself, as ye'll have a chance to notice in a few minutes."

Bowlby looked at the youth as though he had never studied his countenance closely, and then at the young warrior who was now rubbing his dusky face with the blanket which he had been wearing.

"The resemblance is a striking one, as you say, younker, that is, so striking that any body that can see it ought to be struck hard. The Shawanoe has a nose that's slightly Roman, while yours is the worst pug in Greville; his hair is as black as night, and yours is the color of a half-baked brick; he has a small mouth, and your face is made up mostly of jaw; his teeth are small and white, while yours are big enough to shovel dirt with and look as though that was chiefly what you used 'em for; he is tall and straight, while you look as if you had been squashed by a house fallin' on top of you. Yes," added the pioneer, amid the laughter of the others, "the resemblance is striking."

Poor Terry got more than he bargained for that time. His broad honest face flushed,

but his mirth was as hearty as that of the rest.

Deerfoot had heard the remarks of Bowlby, who took care to speak loud enough for all, and he could not help laughing in his silent way. He said nothing, however, and cast a pitying glance at the Irish youth.

Having washed all the paint from his features and neck and wiped them dry with the blanket, he flung the latter upon the ground as though he had no more use for it.

"Don't you intend to take that along?" asked Hardin.

"The clothing of Deerfoot is so warm that he does not wish it, and it may get in the way of his arms and legs when he wants to move them fast," was the reply of the warrior.

"We are pretty well provided for in that respect," said Hardin, "but it seems a pity to throw away such a good article ; so, if you have no objection, I'll take charge of it."

The Shawanoe signified that he had no wish in the matter, and the pioneer flung it over his arm, as though it was an overcoat for which he had no immediate need.

It may be said that Deerfoot was himself again, and he resumed his leadership of the company that had set out on what seemed the hopeless task of rescuing three captives in the hands of a powerful party of Winnebago Indians.

There was not one of the company that did not feel the deepest sorrow for Fred Linden, for it was hard to think of any more cruel blow that could have befallen him. Father, mother, sister, every one of the family except himself, was a captive of one of the most merciless tribes of Indians of the North-west. Not only that, but the sagacious Deerfoot—wisest of his race—dare not hold out any hope to him of ever seeing them again.

The cheerfulness which Terry and the others showed at times was often assumed in the hope of lifting in some degree the crushing weight from the heart of Fred. They uttered jests and indulged in reminiscences of other days, with the aim of winning him from his brooding sorrow. Even Deerfoot showed his sympathy by paying him special attention when the occasional halts allowed him to mingle freely with his

friends. He could not do so while pushing the pursuit, but his thoughtfulness at other times was so marked that it was noticed by all.

Nothing showed more plainly that Deerfoot had not yet fixed upon a definite line of action than his deliberation in the pursuit of the Winnebagoes. Had he settled upon some policy, he would have pushed the rest to the utmost; but though he indulged now and then in something like a spurt, it did not last long, and, having halted to clear the paint from his face, he lingered as though it was his wish to keep a goodly distance between him and the war party until night should close in.

"Gintlemin," said Terry, extending his hand toward the warrior and bowing to his friends, "I have the honor of introducing to yees Mister Deerfut, me own twin brother. What's the matter wid ye?" he demanded, as if angry with the Shawanoe, because he stood quiet without acknowledgment of the compliment: "why don't ye duck yer head and scrape yer fut along the ground, as all the gintry do to me when I chooses to spake to thim?"

To the astonishment of every one, Deerfoot performed the ceremony which Terry asked for. He inclined his head far forward and drew one of his moccasins along the earth as though abashed by the majesty of his audience.

It was the most flagrant waggery in which the youthful warrior had ever been known to indulge by those who saw it. It was accompanied by such a solemn expression that every one laughed. For the first time since the company started, Fred Linden's face lighted up with a smile.

Deerfoot was repaid, for the whole purpose of the whimsicality was to amuse his young friend, who, without dreaming of the fact, said in an undertone to Terry:

"I never saw him do any thing like that before:

"For the raison, I s'pose that he never done any thing of the kind, as me grandfather on me mither's side used to obsarve whin he was axed to pay a debt. Do ye mind, Frid," continued Terry, overdoing his part in his wish to keep up the spirits of his friend,

"that Deerfoot always manes something whin he cuts up in that style?"

"How can that be, when we have just agreed that he never did any thing of the kind until just now?"

"I mane that whiniver he gets a little frisky, it's because he's made up his mind that he sees a way of doing what he has set out to do."

Fred Linden looked into the frank face of his companion, sighed, and shook his head.

"That can not be: there's no hope here."

"Ye must not talk that way," insisted Terry, lowering his voice and speaking the more earnestly because he saw that the rest, including Deerfoot, were watching him. "If ye'll let yer mind run back to the time of our racket in the mountains about four years ago, ye'll remember that I was in just as bad a shape as yer folks are this blessed minute."

Fred shook his head again, with another sigh.

"I feel your kindness, Terry, but it won't do; you and I have tramped the woods too long to deceive ourselves. The simple truth

that father, mother and sister are prisoners with thirty or forty Winnebagoes is enough to show that we might as well try to walk to the Rocky Mountains and bring back a whole tribe of Indians as to rescue them.

At this juncture, Deerfoot, as if fearing that the situation might become strained, walked over to the couple, and, taking the hand of Fred Linden, said in a voice which was heard by all:

"My brother, there is hope!"

CHAPTER XXI.

"IT WAS NOT DEERFOOT."

THE words of Deerfoot caused a profound sensation, for every one knew they would not have been uttered had he not had ground for the hope he expressed.

Whether a series of methods and plans which he had been revolving for hours in his mind suddenly crystallized, or whether there was at that moment a blossoming of the faith which was always present with him, can never be known, but I am inclined to believe that the latter was the case; for the incidents which followed made it seem that they could not have been in accordance with any line of action that he had laid out for himself and his friends.

Fred Linden looked yearningly in the face of the young warrior, and, still clasping his hand, asked:

"Are you in earnest, Deerfoot?"

"Deerfoot speaks with a single tongue."

"God bless you!"

Throwing his arms around the neck of the Shawanoe, Fred Linden sobbed like a child on the breast of its mother.

There was not a dry eye, for the pathos of the act touched all. Bowlby blew his nose more vigorously than ever, and, glaring at Terry who was coughing enthusiastically, demanded:

"What in thunder are *you* laughing at?"

"I ain't laughing, Bowlby, but I'm cryin' to think—think," said the lad, swallowing the lump that kept rising in his throat, "to think what a pity it was that whin—whin ye broke yer ankle four years ago—it—wasn't yer nick."

And poor Terry, unable to restrain his pent-up emotions, wept as unrestrainedly as did Fred Linden. Deerfoot was the calmest of all, though there could be no doubt that in his case the fountains of the deep were broken up, and his heart responded fully to the tender emotions around him.

The touching scene did not last long. Fred was the first to rally, and, as he wiped the tears from his eyes and stepped back, he seemed ashamed of the weakness that had overcome him. There was a general move as if to resume the pursuit, and Deerfoot, as before, placed himself at the head of his friends.

Unlike the Moravian, he kept so far in advance of his followers that he was entirely beyond sight. He told them that he would walk at a moderate pace, and they were always to be on the alert for his signals. If he wished them to hasten their steps he would notify them, and if it should be necessary to halt they would not fail to receive notice; the latter order was the one they were most likely to hear.

With this understanding the tramp was resumed, Bowlby coming next after the leader, and doing his utmost to follow his directions in spirit and letter.

In the face of the impatience of the pursuers, the Shawanoe delayed the pursuit still more, sometimes driving Bowlby almost wild.

The signal which all understood as a warning to halt was heard before they had gone a hundred rods, and it was not recalled until after the passage of half an hour.

This was repeated, until every one was convinced that Deerfoot did not intend that a sight of the Winnebagoes should be gained before night. None of the whites could see the necessity for this extreme caution, but it may be said that Deerfoot knew no reason why the necessity should be seen by them. He was "running the administration," and when he wished a consultation with his cabinet he would be sure to ask for it.

But however aggravating the tardiness of the leader might be, it was of no use to complain. He was master there and no one dared to dispute with him.

And so it came about that the shadows of night were settling through the forest when the little party drew near to the scene of the camp which Deerfoot had discerned from the high rock several miles to the southward. Bowlby was beginning to feel a hope that something would be done, when once again the

low, bird-like whistle, whose meaning could not be mistaken, came tremulously through the arches of the forest.

"Hang it!" growled the hunter, as the rest closed about him; "if this keeps on we won't overtake them varmints afore next winter, and then our only chance will be when they squat down in their lodges and wait for us to call on them."

"What do you imagine is the cause of this tardiness?" asked Hardin, removing his cap and mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"No one knows beside Deerfoot, and I'm not sartin that *he* knows," said Bowlby, showing more dissatisfaction with his dusky friend than he had ever shown before.

"I am sure," ventured Fred Linden, who could not forget the cheering words of the Shawanoe, "that he has fixed upon some plan, though he has not given us a hint of its nature; and that he fears it will be endangered if we are seen by the Winnebagoes. At any rate, whatever his reason, we ought to be the last ones in the world to find fault with it."

There was an earnestness in these gentle words which all felt.

"Wal," replied Bowlby, moving a little awkwardly, "it don't do any hurt to growl so long as the chap you're growling at don't know it, and so long as you don't do nothin' more than growl. Such being the case, a fellow ought to be allowed to do a powerful sight of it if he hankers that way."

"I don't know that I ought to object," said Fred, who was disposed to feel kindly toward every one else.

"Yis, ye had ought to object," insisted Terry Clark, with an assumption of anger which deceived no one; "it's a burning shame that Mr. Bowlby should be findin' fault wid Deerfut and mesilf—cause Deerfut always agraas wid mesilf."

"Being as you don't fancy the business," said Bowlby, turning toward the Irish youth, "why I'll have to shut off—that's all. Nevertheless I'd like to know what's the use of staying right here—holloa! what's the meaning of *that*?"

Another signal reached them from the front,

but it was different from any thing heard since parting company with Deerfoot, though beyond question it came from no one else.

In the gathering gloom the four friends looked in each other's faces with a feeling akin to dismay. They had been commanded to do something, but could not tell what it was. It was not an order to hasten forward, nor to retreat, nor to stop—for all of them had been heard that afternoon and could not be mistaken.

Suddenly it became clear as sunlight to Terry Clark.

"I have it! I have it!" he whispered: "it tells us to step aside from the path, so that no one coming along it can observe us."

Before Terry had interpreted the signal, the meaning flashed upon Fred Linden, though neither of the others would have been able to read it without help.

There was no hesitation, nor asking for more explanation. The four friends moved as silently as shadows—the youths to the right and the men to the left, until the trail left by

the Winnebagoes was between them and several paces distant from each.

Not a moment was to spare. The parties had no more than fairly sheltered themselves behind trees, when they heard the soft rustling of moccasins upon the leaves. The general belief was that it was Deerfoot who was subjecting them to a test of vigilance, but no one presumed upon such being the fact. They remained motionless and hidden behind the trunks, from which they carefully peered out at the warrior.

Enough light lingered among the trees to disclose the figure of the approaching red man the moment he came opposite the watchers. A little later, even though the moon would be out, he could not have been distinguished among the dense vegetation.

The first look at the Indian made known the fact that it was not Deerfoot. He was taller, and of heavier build, the outlines of his figure lacking the grace of the young Shawanoe. Still it was clear that he was unusually powerful and active, and one whom the most daring pioneer would have hesitated to attack single-handed.

When exactly opposite the watchers, the Indian stopped. His head was bent over and he was looking at the ground, as though his eyes were keen enough to detect the strange footprints in the gloom. But such could not be the case, and not one of our four friends felt any misgiving on that account.

But surely he must suspect something, or he would not have halted in that abrupt manner. He was standing erect, a rifle in one hand, while his head could be seen moving about as if on a pivot, as he gazed toward different points of the compass. The Indian was not only looking but listening with that intensity and keenness which is often educated to such a marvelous degree by his race.

CHAPTER XXII.

"HE IS WAITING TO SEE SOME ONE."

YOU have not forgotten that before the Moravian missionary had led his little company far along the trail, he came in collision with the fiery Winnebago known as The Serpent.

Deerfoot knew how common among his people was the practice of sending one of their warriors over the back trail to learn whether an enemy was following them. But he thought it unlikely that the Winnebagoes whom he was pursuing would do any thing like that, for no other reason than that they held the whites in contempt. What concern of theirs was it whether or not the despoiled pioneers clung to their footprints, in the idle hope of gaining back what had been taken away?

But knowing the watchfulness of the red men as he did, the Shawanoe was anxious to

keep out of their sight until nightfall. If he could do so—and it was not a difficult matter—there was less danger of detection by their enemies.

So it was when halting or threading his way through the woods, he was on the alert for a warrior from the front, but none was seen until close to the spot where the main party of Winnebagoes had built their fire earlier in the day. Then he discovered that one of the enemies was near.

Before Deerfoot caught the outlines of the Indian in the gathering gloom, he gave the signal for his friends to move aside from the trail. The message was sent so skillfully that the watchful Winnebago suspected nothing, though, as you know, those who heard it came near spoiling every thing by their failure to understand the command in time.

Deerfoot studied the figure as closely as he could by the aid of the faint light in the woods, but he could not remember that he had ever seen him before, though they might have met in battle. Emerging from the gloom among the trees, the unknown Indian walked slowly

across the open space where the camp-fire had been kindled, and where some of the embers were still burning. His shoulders were thrown forward and his head bent in a way which showed that he was examining the ground with the utmost care.

Not only that, but walking back to where a glow of fire was seen among the ashes, the Winnebago picked up one of the sticks and whirling it about his head so as to fan it into a blaze, he bent down still closer to the earth and studied the signs intently.

Nothing was to be feared just then, for the footprints of Deerfoot, among so many others, could cause no suspicion, though the warrior

had not have to go far before coming upon those of the pioneers. Then, probably, the truth would be known, or at least suspected.

But the red man seemed to be impatient with his work, and, flinging his brand aside, he silently passed from sight like a shadow gliding over the ground. For one minute Deerfoot was inclined to follow him, but believing that nothing was to be gained by doing so he refrained.

Under other circumstances he would have been afraid that Linden or Bowlby would shoot down the warrior on sight, for the laws of the border would have justified them in doing so, but the Shawanoe knew they would wait for his consent, and his consent of course would never be given.

I have told you that The Serpent, when directly opposite the pioneers, who were watching him, halted as though considering some question. He stood erect, and the motion of his head showed that he was looking and listening with all the intensity of his nature.

You may be sure that he saw and heard nothing, for our friends were too wise for that, but from some cause he changed his mind about following the back trail further. He faced the other way, and with the same erect but silent step he moved in the direction of the abandoned camp.

You will not think it necessary for me to tell you that the Shawanoe had no superior in woodcraft ; but wise as he was, he began to feel mystified by the action of the Winnebago, who, stopping near the ashes, stood two or

three minutes as motionless as the trunks of the trees around him.

The night was closing in so fast that at the end of the time named the keen eyes of the Shawanoe were unable to discern his outlines, though he knew that he was still standing like a statue.

Deerfoot was now depending upon his subtle power of hearing to tell him when the Winnebago went away, for no matter how carefully the other might move, he could not hide the soft rustling from the ears of the listener.

Suddenly a twist of flame rose a few inches from the ground. Increasing in size it spread until it lit up several feet of the surrounding gloom. By its light The Serpent was seen stooping over and bringing the embers together so as to nurse the blaze which soon illuminated a dozen square yards.

The night as you will remember was mild, so that it was plain the Winnebago had not started the fire for the purpose of warmth. His figure soon came into full view, and a striking picture it was indeed.

In his right hand was his rifle while his

knife and tomahawk rested in the girdle at his waist. He stood evenly poised on his feet, with his face to the fire and his gaze fixed upon the coals, his attitude being that of one in deep thought.

From his crown with its black straggling hair, down to his face, chest and front, to his beaded moccasins, he was in full view, while the rest of his body was hidden in the gloom, made all the deeper by the contrast.

Deerfoot began to wonder what all this could mean. It was natural enough that the warrior should take the back trail for some distance, but it was hard to see the reason for all his actions.

If he was awaiting the whites who were threading their way toward that point, he had done the most imprudent thing in the world by placing himself in the glare of the light where he was such a good target for an enemy. Not one of the four who held him under their eyes could have asked for a better chance to pick him off.

The action of The Serpent therefore could not be explained on the theory that he was

awaiting the arrival of his enemies, nor was it clear why he stayed behind after Ap-to-to and the rest of the Winnebagoes had penetrated some distance further toward the villages of their tribe.

Whatever the cause which kept the warrior in the vicinity of the camp-fire, it was so strange that Deerfoot could not for a time make a guess at the explanation.

"He is waiting to see some one" was the first clear conclusion reached by the watcher, though that, if possible, deepened his mystification, for what possible guess could be made as to the identity of the person for whom he was waiting?

The conclusion of Deerfoot was a reasonable one; some communication had been opened with the other party of Winnebagoes, separated by several miles of forest, and the warrior by the camp-fire was awaiting the messenger's coming.

There were difficulties in the way of this theory, but since it was the best one which Deerfoot could form, he accepted it for a time,

until it was displaced by a still more startling decision.

How it came to the Shawanoe he never could understand, but like a flash of inspiration the young warrior said to himself:

"The Winnebago is waiting to see Deer-foot!"

It was a startling conclusion indeed, as I have said, but nevertheless it was true.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"THEY ARE NOT INDIANS!"

THE heart of the Moravian missionary was thrilled by the impressive declaration of Gauma, or The Serpent, when, placing his hand in the palm of the good man, he said that he had been conquered, not by the physical prowess of the iron-limbed preacher, but by the more powerful agency of love.

Looking into the moistened eyes of the splendid specimen of the American Indian, the good man said :

"Winnebago, I believe you ! It is not I, but the Great Spirit on high who has subdued your fiery nature, and He will keep you with Him if you will but let Him do so."

No man can follow the sacred profession as long as had the Moravian without learning much of the wickedness of the human heart. He was sure that The Serpent was honest, but

he could not be sure that he would stay so. He had seen his heart touched before, but the impression had passed off like the dew in the morning sun.

Would his heart remain melted? That was the all-important question, for upon it depended the lives of the two captives whom he held prisoner. His position with his people was such that his power was absolute, so far as it could affect the company under his charge. If therefore he could be completely won by the missionary, he might not refuse to show his friendship to the extent of releasing Molly Bourne and Hank Grubbens.

The missionary felt that the face of those two at least hung upon the course of The Serpent. He had said that the intention was to take all of the captives back to the lodges of the Winnebagoes, and there subject the males to torture and death. The Serpent alone could save the two under his charge; would he do it?

"Winnebago," said the good man, speaking in a low voice and in his most earnest manner, "the Great Spirit of the white man, who is

the Great Spirit of the red man as well, has whispered in your ear; you have listened to his words; what did he say to you?"

"He said that the pale face was my brother; that The Serpent must love his brother, or the Great Spirit would not love him."

"Winnebago, He spoke the truth; He has whispered in your ear many times, but you did not listen; will you listen now?"

"The Serpent will—never shall his ears be closed again to the words of the Great Spirit."

This was said with a firmness which left no doubt of the sincerity of the warrior. The missionary, who had been holding the hand of the red man in his own, pressed it warmly as he added:

"God will keep you fast in that good promise, but it will cost you a harder struggle than I gave you a few minutes ago on the ground."

"That can not be," said The Serpent, with something resembling a smile, "for then The Serpent would *die*."

The Moravian smiled in turn at the compli-

ment of his late antagonist, and hastened to explain :

"The fight will be a hard one, but you can conquer if you hold out."

"The Serpent *will* hold out!" was the confident response."

"I am glad you speak thus, and the test shall be made *now*: Winnebago, it is the will of the Great Spirit that you set free the captives whom who you have taken. You can not be blamed for those you struck down in battle, but it is wrong to torture the men to death and to keep the women for your squaws, as you meant to do with them."

The Serpent made no answer, but looked down to the ground as if in deep thought. The missionary studied his face closely for he knew how severe a struggle was going on within that dusky breast. It might have seemed cruel to put the new convert on his mettle so soon, but the test after all ought not to have been too severe for him to stand.

What is faith without works? What do all the professions of a person amount to, if the life he leads is contrary to their spirit? Of

what use, therefore, could be the declarations of The Serpent, if he did not act in accord with them?

This was the ground the missionary took, and though he trembled for the issue, he was hopeful.

The struggle, whatever its nature, that was going on in the mind of The Serpent, ended sooner than was expected by the preacher. The warrior threw up his glance so quickly that Griffiths thought he heard some suspicious sound.

"Let my father and his people wait here till The Serpent comes again from among the trees."

And without another word the warrior turned about and walked off, as though he expected to see the white people no more.

If possible the disgust of Jonas Bourne was greater than before. He had seen a furious Indian, while struggling to slay the missionary, overthrown by him, and then, when he was at his mercy, the conqueror took care to see that he suffered no harm. Not only that, but he allowed him to walk away unmolested

when he might have served a good purpose as an exchange for one at least of the captives.

It is probable that had Mr. Bourne been aware that the warrior who had just turned his back upon them was the leader of the company holding his daughter captive, he would have broken into open rebellion, but he and the others listened to the good man's explanation before venturing to condemn him.

He told the whole story, and you can imagine the sensation it produced. Bourne turned pale when he heard what the intentions of the captors were respecting their prisoners, nor was he much reassured by the pledge of The Serpent to the missionary.

"We have made a mistake," said he, compressing his pale lips and shaking his head; "we ought, or rather *you* ought not to let such an important Indian as he get away. We could have done just as Deerfoot did four years ago, when he traded Black Bear for Bowlby and Terry Clark."

"You may be right," replied the missionary, who could not free himself from a fear

that he had made a grievous error, "but my conscience would not allow me to take the course you wish, and you know as well as I that there are obstacles to the success of your plan that could not be overcome."

"There was a chance of success, at least, which is more than can be said of your proposal."

"Be not so sure of that. Suppose we had kept The Serpent as a prisoner and I had gone to his people and told them that he would not be set free, would they not have held *me* as a hostage for him?"

"That might have been, but The Serpent being a leader of the Winnebagoes, they would have been glad to give all they could for his return."

"What would have prevented their coming and taking him away from us?"

"We might have hastened to Greville and placed him in the block-house, where the whole tribe of Winnebagoes could not have taken him from us."

"You know not what you are saying; the red men are cunning; The Serpent would have

been missed ; and you would have been overtaken before reaching the settlement with him. Then, too, if they had put your child to the torture before your eyes, you would have been glad enough to surrender The Serpent for the sake of saving yourself from that sight, even though it should be her fate to suffer death after a time."

"I had hope," continued the stricken father, who could not bring himself to see things as did the missionary, "that if you went among the Winnebagoes with the message they would show enough respect for you to help our scheme."

The Moravian shook his head.

"I pardon such blindness on your part, because of your anxiety for your dear child ; but when the mists shall have cleared from before your eyes you will see clearly."

"Tell me then, good Mr. Griffiths, do you believe that The Serpent will bring back my Molly?"

"I can only say that I *hope* he will ; certainly, if his mood remains the same after he joins his people, he will do so."

"But is there a probability that it will!"

"I can only repeat that I hope so, but, for all that, I think that we have adopted the only plan that gives the least promise of success."

Since nothing remained for the little company to do but to wait and hope, they seated themselves on the ground to pass the hours of suspense as quietly as they could. One of the party caused some misgiving by saying he believed that when The Serpent did come back he would bring, instead of the captives, enough warriors to slay the missionary and all his companions.

"If that proves the case," said the leader, "we are as safe here as any where; let us see that our guns are ready, and we will make a good fight. What an impressive lesson that we should always have our houses ready for the coming of the Master, for come He must, sooner or later."

While these words in one sense were reassuring, you can understand what little comfort they gave to the father, whose whole being went out to his beloved child.

It was plain to all that the missionary had

grave doubts of the loyalty of the Winnebago. He might well ask himself whether it was reasonable to expect such a leader among his people to change his whole nature so completely as to release the captives, whom doubtless he would have been as glad as any of his warriors to see put to the torture.

But behold !

The afternoon was not half gone, and the little party were seated on the ground, conversing only at intervals, and then in the lowest tones, when the missionary started to his feet.

"Some one is coming," he whispered ;
"Look to your weapons !"

Every one sprang up and held his rifle ready for use, while all eyes were turned toward the point upon which the leader had fixed his gaze.

Yes, some one was coming. The undergrowth parted, and the figure of The Serpent emerged to view.

"Look out !" said the excited Mr. Bourne :
"he has other Indians with him !"

"*They are not Indians !*" exclaimed the

missionary, more agitated than any of his friends.

Down went the gun from the hands of Jonas Bourne, who bounded forward.

"My daughter! my daughter! O my own Molly! God be thanked!"

With a low cry of joy, the child ran to meet her parent, and was enfolded in his arms, their joy so vivid over the reunion that they saw and thought of nothing else, caring only that a merciful Father had plucked the brand from the burning, and that she who was dead was alive again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"OFF WITH YOU : GOOD-BY."

WITH Molly Bourne came Hank Grubbens, who stepped aside and stared around him, as did most of the others, not quite able to grasp the meaning of the strange scene.

The Serpent, who had been the means of bringing back so much happiness to the sorrowing hearts, showed an embarrassment hardly less than that of the rest. He who was so accustomed to cruelty and violence could not school himself all at once to look unmoved upon what he saw before him.

The Moravian tried hard to master his emotion, and had nearly succeeded, when he gave up the attempt, and, placing one hand over his face, stood with heaving bosom and the tears streaming down his cheeks. Surely when mercy and love can do so much to

lighten human hearts, we all should strive to develop those divine instincts within us.

Only for a moment or two did the tempest of emotion sweep over the good man. Molly was still in the arms of her father, when the preacher brushed aside the tears, and, walking over to The Serpent, the most uncomfortable spectator of all, took his hand.

"Winnebago, are you sorry you have done this?"

"The heart of The Serpent is light."

"That is because you have pleased the Great Spirit; Gauma, you have won the victory."

"The Serpent has fought harder than ever before; something bad kept whispering to him when he was walking among the trees that he would be a squaw if he should do this. Then, as he looked at his warriors, his heart failed him and he said he would not do so; but all the time another voice whispered in his ear; it was a softer voice, just as the Great Spirit always talks, and it told The Serpent to do it; and he did it."

"And the Great Spirit will bless you for what you have done to-day as He never yet has

blessed you," added the missionary, fervently pressing the hand of the Winnebago and feeling tempted to throw his arms about his neck.

"But tell me," added the good man, straightening up, as he mastered his emotions, "how did you explain it to your people when you said you wished to set the captives free?"

The Serpent's painted face wore a curious expression, and he hesitated a second or two before answering.

"The warriors were not told that the pale faces would be set free; they were told that they would be taken through the woods to the company of Ap-to-to, because he had sent for them."

A light broke in upon the Moravian. The Serpent, instead of making known his real purpose, had disguised it. Returning from his scout over the back trail, he had told his warriors that he met a messenger from Ap-to-to's party, with orders that the prisoners should be sent to him. As was afterward explained by The Serpent, his wish was for him and his warriors to continue their tramp home.

ward by the course they were then pursuing, which would join that of the other party at the close of the second day.

This subterfuge worked well, as it could not fail to do for a time, for nothing was further from the thoughts of the Winnebagoes than that The Serpent felt any thing but the most uncompromising hatred toward the white race. He had proved that so often by his exploits that Ap-to-to himself would have been suspected before him.

It may be doubted whether Gauma could have succeeded by any other means. Had he set out to free the captives by making known his purpose, there would have been a rebellion; for with the leader were several of that band which made such a fine record in the attack on the settlement that morning, and they were not the ones to allow any sentimentality to sway them.

Although the Moravian did not refer to it, he saw that The Serpent's action was one which he could never explain to Ap-to-to and the other warriors. The most skillfully contrived fiction could not hide the flagrant

defiance. But it was done, and beyond recall.

"Yes," said Hank Grubbens, when he saw that his friends had some curiosity to hear from him, "the chap over there managed it well, but if he hadn't been quick he would have been too late."

"How was that?" asked one of his hearers.

"Why, I had just made up my mind that this had gone fur enough, and I wouldn't stand it any longer. I tell you I was getting mad and was all ready to make a rush, when up steps this feller and motions for us to leave. I held back a little at first, 'cause I wasn't willing to let 'em off so easy, but I happened to think it might be bad for Miss Molly there, so I put my hat under my arm, jined the procession and here we are."

"And precious little help *you* gave in the matter," said the missionary sternly, for he had no admiration for the ne'er-do-well with whom he had expostulated so often in vain.

By this time, Molly Bourne and her father had recovered from the first emotion of their meeting. The young lady, whose eyes were

still red from weeping, shook hands with each of her friends, the Moravian kissing her with as pure a fatherly love as though she had been his own daughter. The Serpent had withdrawn a short distance, and stood looking at the whites with the indifference which his race are so capable of assuming while in the presence of white men. He had overcome his agitation, and was now master of it. The missionary believed that a peace and calmness had succeeded the struggle with his evil nature, and having won the victory he would now stay to the end.

It may be said that the mission of the little party under the leadership of the Moravian was ended. They had set out to rescue Molly Bourne and Hank Grubbens, with hardly a shadow of hope, and the two were now with them. What next should be done?

Before deciding upon the answer to this question, the missionary drew The Serpent to one side, and they engaged in an earnest conversation. As was their custom, they spoke in Winnebago, so that they would not have been understood had all their words reached

the ears of the others who were watching them with such interest.

This was Grubbens's opportunity and he improved it to impress upon his listeners the theory that he could have left the custody of the Winnebagoes at any moment he choose, and that he was restrained simply by his wish not to imperil the safety of his companion.

"You see that if I had just let myself out and slung 'em right and left as I would have done if alone, why they might have turned on Molly, and abused her by way of revenge."

"But you might have taken her away with you," suggested one of his listeners.

"I did think of that, and if that Indian hadn't got scared and let us go——"

"You would have died of fright," interrupted Jonas Bourne, impatient at the vaporings of the young man. "Let us hear no more of such stuff, for it deceives no one. The dominie there had a talk with The Serpent, as they call him, and persuaded him to go and bring you and Molly to us. Nothing else in the world would have saved you, and I'll own that I didn't believe there was any

hope of that. As soon as I get the chance I'll ask the pardon of the dominie for the way I talked to him."

The conference between the missionary and the Winnebago was not long, though it was of great importance. They had quickly reached a conclusion, and the venerable preacher walked over to the group to make it known.

"You, Jonas," said he, addressing the father of Molly, "are to take your child, and lose no time in reaching home with her."

"But she isn't afraid to go alone," said the pioneer. "If I can be of any help to the rest of the folks, I want to do what I can."

"You are not needed, for though Molly is a brave girl, it would not be right to let her travel so far when night is coming on."

"If there's any danger to Molly, why I'll take care of her," volunteered Hank Grubbens, who would have been glad to go back to the settlement, and leave the others to do what they could to help Deerfoot and his friends.

"It doesn't make much difference where you are," said Bourne; "but since some one ought to go with Molly, I am the most fitting person. Dominie, I can't talk the lingo of the redskins, but will you thank that fellow there for me, and tell him there is nothing which I will not be glad to do to show my gratitude?"

The message was translated to The Serpent, who grunted something which meant nothing and acted as though he cared little whether he was thanked or not.

"And while I am about it, I want to ask your pardon."

"For what, my man?" asked the missionary.

"For questioning your judgment, and—"

"Never mind that! Off with you: good-by."

Waving their farewells to the rest, the happy father and his daughter started homeward, both reaching the settlement late that night, where, as you can well imagine, they received a most joyous welcome.

Then, as the Moravian turned to explain the

line of action agreed upon by him and The Serpent, he noticed that the Winnebago was gone. But he was not alarmed, for he understood what it meant: The Serpent had started in haste to meet Deerfoot, the Shawanoe.

CHAPTER XXV.

"A THIRD PARTY ARRIVED ON THE SCENE."

ENOUGH has been said to give you an inkling of the reason why The Serpent waited by the deserted camp-fire for the coming of the young Shawanoe who never suspected that fact until he had watched the Winnebago for some time.

When the Moravian held his last brief talk with The Serpent, he was astonished and delighted to find how thoroughly the heart of the warrior had been changed. By this I do not mean that the transformation was like unto that of the great apostle after the light had shined upon him while on the road to Damascus. That wonderful, mysterious, divine new birth does not follow so soon upon the blind groping of him who hardly understood that for which he was searching. But The Serpent had been conscious for a long

time of the tugging of something within which prompted him to reach out for help. Having resolved to obey the strange whisperings, he straightway became more resolute in clinging to the hand that seemed to be reached down for his guidance.

The Winnebago, therefore, told the missionary that having liberated his own captives, he now meant to make his way to the band of Ap-to-to, and risk his life to set free Linden and his wife and daughter.

This was a task prodigiously greater than that which he had just performed, and, though the will of the Winnebago was firm, yet he himself could not see the way by which it was to be done, or in fact to be attempted.

The missionary impressed upon The Serpent that he must not take the first step until he had seen Deerfoot, and effected an understanding with him. The Shawanoe had some scheme of his own, and two such wise men as he and The Serpent were certain to have their ideas brightened by mutual discussion.

It mattered nothing that The Serpent and Deerfoot were strangers. They would have no

trouble in coming to an agreement since the Shawanoe spoke the tongue of the Winnebago as well as did The Serpent himself.

The Winnebago, instead of attempting to overtake Deerfoot and his companions, hastened through the forest ahead of them. Striking the footprints of Ap-to-to's party, it did not take him long to learn that he was between the warriors and the white men. Accordingly he set out over the back trail, and followed it until he reached the deserted camp. By that time it was so dark that he decided to stay where he was until Deerfoot and his friends should reach the spot. He knew they were not far off.

He made a brief search for the footprints, which he failed to find. Then he started a blaze in the hope that it would bring the Shawanoe to him.

In taking this course The Serpent was well aware that he was exposing himself to some danger, but the missionary had given him confidence. He knew that Deerfoot would not fire upon him, unless he believed it necessary; and, since Deerfoot was the leader of

his party, the risk after all did not seem to be so great.

The slight noise which the Shawanoe purposely made in advancing from the gloom was heard by the keen ear of the Winnebago who instinctively raised his gun and looked searchingly out in the darkness.

"It is Deerfoot," were the words of the Shawanoe, uttered in a low voice.

The gun of the Winnebago was lowered, and he replied :

"The Serpent has waited long for Deerfoot."

"Why does the Winnebago look for the Shawanoe?"

"The good man who tells us about the Great Spirit sent The Serpent to talk with Deerfoot."

This was important, if true. The Shawanoe would have been glad to believe it, but he was cautious. While not showing distrust, he kept several steps from the other, and held himself ready to meet any sudden leap he might make. Unquestionably the Winnebago was the stronger of the two, but in activity

and subtlety he was not to be compared with the Shawanoe.

In the conversation which follows I seek to make clear only the substance of what passed between these two warriors, met under such strange circumstances.

"Is The Serpent the friend of the pale faces?"

This was somewhat abrupt, and Deerfoot regretted the question the moment it passed his lips. The Winnebago hesitated so long before answering that the suspicions of the young warrior were increased.

"The words of my brother sound strange in the ear of The Serpent," finally replied the Winnebago, as though talking with himself. "When the sun went down behind the woods, The Serpent hated the pale faces: now he does not."

"What has made this change?"

"The Great Spirit," said the warrior, looking reverently toward the stars. "The good father with the gray hair has talked many times with The Serpent, who would not hear his words. To-day he sprang at him with a

knife, but the good man threw him down, and then when The Serpent's life was his no more he gave it back to him. He felt sorry for his enemies, just as he told me there was One who once gave His life for the whole world. When the good father did that the heart of The Serpent became like the heart of a pappoose."

"What did my brother do?" asked Deerfoot, who, as you can well understand, was deeply touched by the story of the Winnebago.

"He went back to his warriors; he took away the captives, and brought them to their friends. They are free."

Deerfoot was astounded. He recoiled a step, and looked at the Winnebago a full half minute without speaking. The Serpent seemed to enjoy the sensation he had produced, and looked calmly at the youth in silence.

"Can it be he is telling the truth?" was the query which the Shawanoe asked himself. He was inclined to believe the amazing story, but his caution bade him go slowly in that direction. None could know better than Deerfoot the innate treachery of his own race, and he

still kept the little fire between him and the Winnebago, who, however, showed no wish to approach closer.

"Why does The Serpent seek Deerfoot?"

"He will give his life if it will save the captives who are with the party of Ap-to-to. The Serpent wishes to talk with Deerfoot, for the Shawanoe has a mind full of light. He may give some of the light to The Serpent."

This statement was too clear to be mistaken. The Winnebago was eager to prove his change of sentiment toward the white race by still greater service than he had already given. He was ready to go among Ap-to-to's larger war party, and risk his life in the attempt to free George Linden and his wife and daughter.

Surely no stronger proof could be asked for or given, but the difficulty, even in the eyes of Deerfoot, was insurmountable. It was well enough to resolve that the prisoners should be rescued, but who should answer the question as to the means of effecting that rescue?

Deerfoot was certain that never in all his life had his brain been in such a haze of doubt. He wanted to believe the words of The Ser-

pent, but they were too extraordinary to be credited, or at least he could not free himself of several doubts while seeking to credit them.

One of the embers composing the fire between the feet of the two warriors fell apart. The twist of flame that curled upward for a moment brought the face of The Serpent in plainer view than at any time since the meeting of the two. Deerfoot looked keenly at the painted countenance, and for the first time became certain that he had seen it before that evening.

The Serpent was one of the warriors who, about four years before, had made a raid through the valley a hundred miles to the southward among the Ozarks. Deerfoot saw him at that time, and knew even then that he was one of the fiercest braves of the tribe. He had recognized him among the most demonstrative mourners that afternoon at the burial of Black Bear.

While the Shawanoe in his devout faith in the Great Spirit could set no bounds to its power, nevertheless he knew how hard it was

to interpret the divine purposes at all times.

The recognition of The Serpent produced such a disquieting effect upon Deerfoot that he felt like doubting his story altogether. He had opened his lips to do so, when most unexpectedly a third party arrived on the scene.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"HE WILL SHOW THE SERPENT THE RIGHT WAY."

NOW when The Serpent parted company with the Moravian missionary, after Hank Grubbens and Molly Bourne were restored to their friends, he had said nothing about the course that the other party was to follow. Indeed he seemed to feel no interest in any thing except his own success, and as you will recollect, left Mr. Griffiths in ignorance of what he meant to do.

The Serpent took a shorter cut through the wilderness to the party of Ap-to-to, while the others, as you have been told, found the trail left by their friends, and kept to it until they caught sight of The Serpent.

They pushed on with much vigor, and only a few minutes after the appearance of The Serpent and his odd movements before Deer-

foot's party, the missionary and his friends appeared upon the scene. They were taken for Indians in the gloom, but Fred Linden overheard some words spoken in a low voice, which made known that they were white men. Thereupon the two men, Bowlby and Hardin, advanced and shook hands with those from whom they had parted but a few hours before.

You may imagine the astonishment when the new arrivals told their story. A brief while before there seemed not the remotest hope of saving Grubbens and Molly, and now they were free. The maiden was well on her way home, if not already there, and here was Grubbens as proof of the wonderful deliverance.

"Wall, that beats any thing I ever heerd on," was the exclamation of Bowlby, who almost felt faint over the news; "if the dominie hadn't told us, I wouldn't believe a word."

"Ain't I here?" demanded Grubbens.

"That don't make no difference," was the sturdy response of the hunter, whose opinion of the fellow was any thing but compliment-

ary; "I wouldn't take your oath that you was alive if there warn't somebody else to back it up."

"It's all right," said Terry Clark, as if anxious to have the dispute settled; "that's Hank, Mr. Bowlby; don't ye observe his bootiful rid hair shining through the gloom? He's alive, though I had a little doubt meself whether the spalpeen was telling the throoth when he remarked that he wasn't somebody else."

"And so that Winnebago called The Serpent set you free?" asked Fred Linden, deeply moved by the narration.

"He was the identical chap," replied Grubbens, who felt it hardly prudent to attempt the rôle of a hero before those who knew his real character.

"Didn't the other warriors make any opposition?"

"They would have done so had they known the truth," said the missionary, who saw that Fred did not fully understand the story; "but The Serpent made believe that Ap-to-to had sent for the captives. It would

have been very strange had the warriors suspected his motives, for he has been one of the most terrible Winnebagoes that ever lived. The marvelous part of the business is that Gauma should have done that which you can see was easy for him to do."

"You say that he has set out to meet Deerfoot?"

"Yes, and doubtless they have met before this."

When the Moravian learned of the signal emitted by Deerfoot and of the strange Indian whom his friends had seen advance to where they stood and return, the good man saw what it all meant.

"The two are within a hundred yards of us: stay you here while I go forward and join them."

Thus it came about that the missionary presented himself to the two warriors at the moment when the younger was on the point of telling the elder that he was sure he spoke with "two tongues."

The Moravian shook hands warmly with both, and since the Shawanoe understood

Winnebago as well as a native, that tongue was used by all three, for the reason also that The Serpent might have suspected the sincerity of one of them at least had a language been employed with which he was not familiar.

"Deerfoot," said the Moravian, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the young warrior in his affectionate way, which was always pleasing to the youth, "I suppose that Gauma has told you of the wonderful events that have taken place this afternoon."

"He has told Deerfoot that my good father spared his life—that he has freed the captives—and that he is now on his way to Ap-to-to's camp to see whether he can do the same for the pale-faces there ; but——"

Before Deerfoot could say more the sagacious Moravian broke in :

"And every word that he has told you is true ; the Great Spirit has given him a new heart, and he is now as anxious to do His will as he was a few hours ago to do his own pleasure. I asked him to seek you out and to talk with you, for if there is any hope for George

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and his wife and daughter, you and he together will find what it is."

This brushed aside the mists that had gathered before the eyes of the Shawanoe. Moving around the edge of the fire he extended his hand to his brother, who returned the warm pressure. They were now friends and trusted each other.

You would grow wearied if I should give you the whole conversation that followed among these three remarkable persons. They had but one purpose, and that was to secure the liberty of the captives with Ap-to-to's band ; but such had been their object all along, and the question remained still unanswered.

Here are a few facts that must be stated :

Ap-to-to and his men were in camp a mile to the northward, and, as I have already made mention, the two war parties were to reunite at the close of the following day. There was no special reason why they should have divided at all, but The Serpent said the idea was Ap-to-to's, who hoped to draw the white men into a trap, and thought he could do it better by that means than if they stayed together.

If nothing should be accomplished within the following twenty-four hours, then it was folly to hope for success. By that time the treachery of The Serpent would become known, and he would become an outlaw to his people. As soon as Ap-to-to and the rest learned what he had done, his life would not be safe for a minute in their hands.

None knew this better than The Serpent, but he took his step deliberately, and he did not intend to sacrifice himself to the vengeance of his brother warriors. He had counted the cost of his change of base, and he was ready.

It seemed idle to hope that the same means could be used in the second as in the first instance. What plea could The Serpent make to Ap-to-to for the transfer of the three captives to his own party? The request itself would excite a curiosity which could not be satisfied without a revelation of the truth.

Although Deerfoot had played so well the part of a Winnebago warrior early in the day, he could not do so again. Ap-to-to knew all his men too well to be deceived. Besides,

there was nothing to be gained by acting such a part. None but a zany would have hoped thus to outwit the vigilant Winnebagoes.

The result of the conference, which lasted half-an-hour, promised to be a deepening of the despair that all felt, when The Serpent startled his companions by striking the butt of his rifle on the earth with a thump which all heard.

"What is the matter?" asked the Moravian, "what does *that* mean?"

"The Serpent has sharp eyes, and he sees something."

"What is it?" asked Deerfoot, sharing the agitation of the other two.

You know that as a rule the American Indian is master of his emotions, but for two or three minutes the Winnebago walked back and forth, and moved around, just as you do when you hear some news that takes away your self-possession.

His companions watched him with strange feelings, but they did not question him further. If he chose to keep his secret they were willing, though their curiosity was as great as

yours and mine would have been under similar circumstances.

Stopping abruptly before his two friends, with the small fire burning at their feet, the warrior said :

"The Serpent must go to Ap-to-to."

"When will he come back?"

"He can not say ; perhaps before the rising of the sun—perhaps after it has risen—perhaps never."

"But," interposed the Moravian, who checked himself, uncertain what he ought to say in the face of such a singular situation.

"The Serpent can not tell," remarked the Winnebago looking off into the gloom, as if communing with himself ; "he has thought of a way that may bring back the captives, but it may not."

"Can we do any thing to help you?" asked the missionary.

"My father and my brother may ask the Great Spirit to hold up the hand of The Serpent."

"You may depend upon our doing that unceasingly."

Deerfoot as well as the Moravian were eager to have their new friend make known something of his plans, but, as before, they refrained from questioning him, knowing that if he wished to inform them he would do so without any inquiry from them.

For a full minute the Winnebago stood in his thoughtful position. Several times he seemed on the point of saying something ; but if he was he changed his mind and held his peace. Then, with the same abruptness as before, he walked off in the gloom and vanished.

Left alone, the missionary and the Shawanoe looked in each other's faces in silence. The elder was the first to speak.

"It is the work of the Great Spirit," said he reverently ; "only a few hours ago Gauma was the fiercest warrior of the Winnebagoes : now he is the friend of the white man."

"Great is the power of Him," said Deerfoot, softly, looking upward ; "He will show The Serpent the right way."

"Let us pray that He will, for if he fails, then must we believe that for reasons of His

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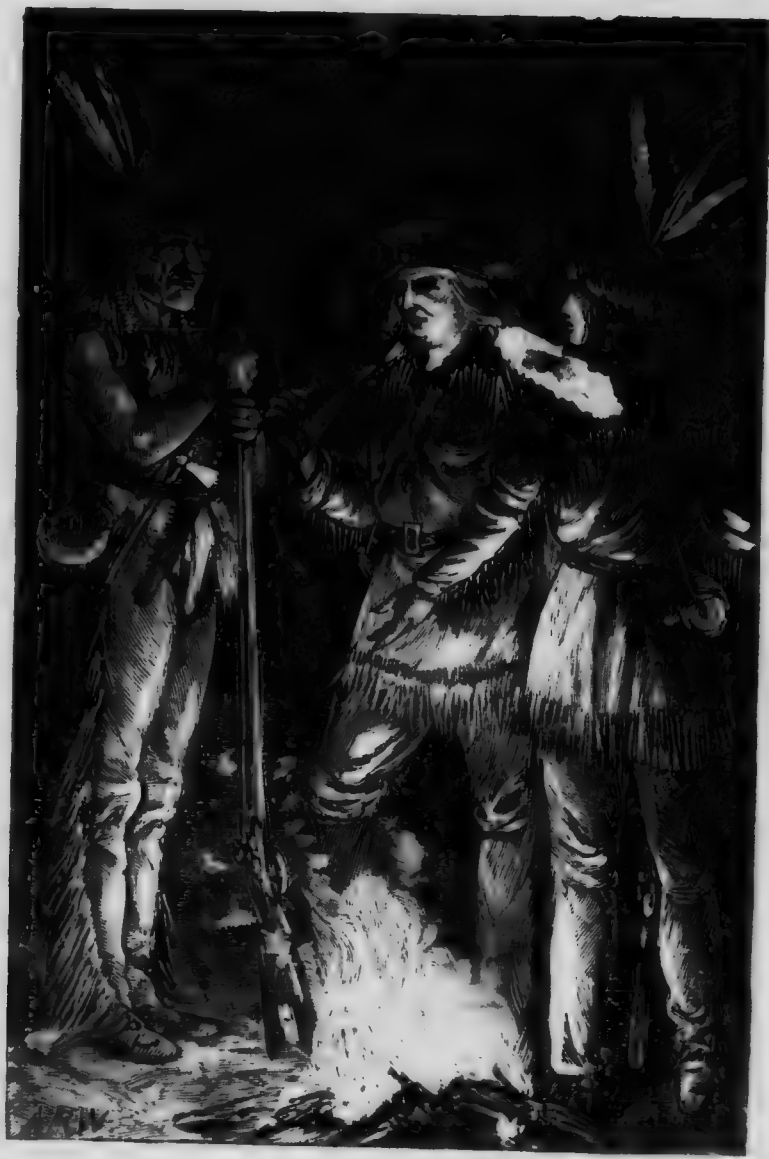
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"He will show the Serpent the right way."

(Page 262.)

own, God wills that our friends shall suffer torture and death."

Saddened and oppressed, despite the actions of The Serpent, the two turned about and taking the opposite course from that of their friend, they quickly joined the rest of the party, who were impatiently awaiting them.

Fred Linden was thrown into a flutter of hope and expectancy by the story which the missionary told, but neither he nor any of his companions could form the faintest conjecture of what scheme had entered the head of the Winnebago.

Not if they had been given a week could they have guessed his line of action, for it bore no resemblance to any thing of which they had ever heard, or that had ever entered their minds, or was likely ever to take place again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THE SERPENT HIMSELF QUIETLY WALKED
FORTH FROM THE WOOD."

AS I have told you, the larger party of Winnebagoes went into camp at no very great distance to the north of the spot where the Moravian and Shawanoe held their conference with The Serpent. As is the practice of their people, they chose a site near a stream of running water, and all the game that was needed for supper was obtained by several of their hunters before the set of sun.

While there was nothing in the scene, at least for a time, different from those which I have described to you more than once, yet the leading incident was of a new nature altogether.

Black Bear, the war chief of the Winnebagoes, was dead and buried, and it was felt

that a successor should be chosen without delay. Just as when our president is called away, the vice-president steps into his place, so it was decided that the great Winnebago nation should not be long without a head and leader.

The decision was reached that the new chief should be chosen that evening, and it was this fact which gave the encampment an unusual character.

Now you must think, from many references I have made, that there was but one warrior thought of for this honor, and that of course was Ap-to-to. Had Black Bear been given a voice in the matter he would have named that wily fellow with the twisted nose, for the latter had long cultivated his good will.

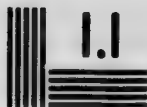
There had been a general feeling among the warriors that Ap-to-to was the next in order in the presidential succession, but that sentiment had undergone a change during the last few days, especially since the attack on the settlement.

You know that all through that fierce fighting, Ap-to-to and several of his warriors



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remained among the rocky hills to the north of Greville, while the chief lost his life during the contest. This fact, being generally known, deepened the feeling against Ap-to-to to such an extent that a strong opposition developed during the journey homeward and in the encampment, and he was frightened by the fear of being defeated.

The dearest dream of Ap-to-to's life was that he should go back to his villages as the successor of the great war chief, Black Bear: the prospect, therefore, that another would be chosen to the honor filled him with chagrin and dismay.

Not only was the opposition to Ap-to-to strong, but it was dangerous, because it had settled upon the one who should receive the honor in his place: he was The Serpent.

It may be said that he made his reputation that day in the attack upon the settlement. He had been known for years as without a superior among his people for prowess, daring, and readiness of resource, but the fame of the brave Indian was completed by the leadership of the band that attacked the house

of George Linden with such courage and success.

The plan of making The Serpent chief had been named to him before, but he was one of those rare persons who shut their eyes against political preferment. He insisted that the honor belonged to one warrior only, and he was Ap-to-to.

This refusal would have been decisive, but for the events of the day. They lowered Ap-to-to and raised The Serpent so much in the estimation of the other warriors, that the current was setting irresistibly against the former.

Now it was the custom of the Winnebagoes, in choosing a chief, to call all the warriors together and to give them a voice in the question. It was decided, however, to vary the custom in the present instance.

It was agreed by a majority that they should not wait until the next night, when the rest of the war party would join them. These two together formed a large majority of the warriors of the tribe, and the party which had taken the matter in charge constituted

less than half of those entitled to vote, so that it would seem they were assuming more privileges than belonged to them.

The cause of this was the impatience which a number felt with Ap-to-to since his shirking of duty and his persistency in pressing his claims for the chieftainship.

Thus you will understand that the wily warrior was the most uneasy of the two score, when they went into camp for the night and the question came up for decision.

Nothing could more strikingly prove the contempt in which the Winnebagoes held the whites than the events of that night. They did not send any one back over the trail as was done by The Serpent, to find out whether the settlers were following them, nor did they even place sentinels around their camp to guard against any attempt at rescue by the friends of the prisoners. It was a matter of indifference to the Indians what was done or attempted to be done by the pioneers. And you can not wonder that such should be their feeling.

Early in the evening, Linden, his wife, and

his daughter, were sitting on a fallen tree and doing what they could to cheer one another. The settler of course was without his weapon and in no form to make a fight, had the chance presented itself. The Winnebagoes had offered them no indignity, for they could well afford to wait until the arrival at the villages. Not only that, but each of the three hapless ones had been presented with a piece of the half-cooked venison for supper, and they were allowed to drink from the clear running brook near them.

Had George Linden been alone when the latter privilege was given, he would have made a break for liberty ; but in that case it is not likely the temptation would have been put in his way.

As I have said, the three who were seated on the log did what they could to encourage each other, but it was very little they could do. Bright-hearted Edith, seeing how utterly her parents were depressed, assumed a cheerfulness which she was far from feeling, and which could not deceive them. Even the maiden herself was compelled to see how

vain her efforts were, and she finally gave them up.

From several expressions in broken English, and from the action of the warriors themselves, George Linden was able to fathom the cause of the stir among the Winnebagoes.

You will find that persons at the most serious crises of their lives often become interested in trifles which they would not notice at other times.

Thus it was that Linden, although unable to understand an expression in Winnebago, was able to keep a fair run of the aboriginal caucusing and electioneering. Nearly every warrior carried a pipe in his mouth, and some of them smoked so vigorously (just like their civilized friends on similar occasions) that the smoke which curled upward rivaled that of the camp-fire itself. Here and there were groups squatted on the ground or sitting cross-legged like so many tailors, talking and gesticulating as though the fate of all their beloved hunting-grounds was dependent upon the issue, while others walked back and forth discussing the question with the same earnestness.

It might well be wondered how there could be so much argument when the sentiment was so strongly in favor of one man—The Serpent. It may be answered that most of the talk of the warriors was on the same side of the question. Thus three Winnebagoes who stood so far back that they were barely visible by the reflected glow, simply strengthened each other in the view that no one except The Serpent was to be elected.

You would say that there was no possible chance for Ap-to-to, and that he ought to have withdrawn from the contest, resigning in favor of some one else, as the expression goes. But you know how hard it is to convince an aspiring politician that the people prefer another to him. Ap-to-to continued moving hither and thither, discussing, promising, pleading, and when it was prudent threatening those who opposed him.

The strongest argument used by him was that The Serpent would not accept the honor if it were offered to him. This statement was not without its weight, for there was more than one warrior who had heard Gauma utter the declaration.

The explanation by Ap-to-to of his absence among the hills was that he and several braves were engaged in a sharp fight there, but since none could show any trophy of the victory they claimed, the statement was not satisfactory by any means.

Ap-to-to could not fail to see that the current was setting too strongly against him to be resisted. As a last resort he asked that the matter should be postponed until the next night, when the two companies would reunite, and all could have a voice in its settlement.

The majority refused to concede this, inasmuch as Ap-to-to had been quite willing that the question should be disposed of until he found another than himself was agreed upon.

Finally, Ap-to-to begged that they would wait till The Serpent could be sent for. If he agreed to accept the chieftainship, then Ap-to-to would yield, as of course he would be compelled to do.

While this request was under consideration The Serpent himself quietly walked forth from the wood and joined the astonished assemblage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THE SERPENT HAD SCORED HIS FIRST POINT."

THE American Indian has many traits in common with his civilized brother. For a long time after the arrival of The Serpent the Winnebago encampment was a political meeting, in which the lines were drawn very sharply.

Before advancing from the gloom, Gauma tarried long enough within earshot to get a fair knowledge of what it all meant. The surprise which he showed, in his restrained way, was assumed, for you do not need to be told that he was one of the shrewdest and most cunning of his kind.

The instant he was recognized, most of the others crowded around him, grunting their pleasure, which was so deep that it seemed hard for them to refrain from embracing him. He saluted all, and explained his presence by saying that since his own party went into camp,

he decided to come through the woods to ask the advice of Ap-to-to on several matters.

Ap-to-to perhaps was the most demonstrative of all in his delight over the arrival of The Serpent. His welcome was like that extended to one who had come back from the dead. He knew that the visitor had but to say a single word to become the successor of Black Bear, but a deep-laid scheme was in his mind.

Indeed the feeling was so high among the Winnebagoes that it pressed aside all others. It was almost unanimously decided that the election should be held at once, and The Serpent was told that he was the one fixed upon for the leadership of the Winnebagoes.

During these exciting moments Ap-to-to was the most wretched of men. He pined to and fro, not daring to make the appeal to The Serpent, which more than once was on his tongue; but his eyes told that which he did not dare put into words.

There was no stopping the proceedings, and, when the Winnebagoes gathered in a large circle, which extended near enough to the log whereon the captives were sitting to shut out

all thought of escape on their part, The Serpent suggested another comparison with the policy of white men under similar circumstances. He meant to make a speech.

"Brothers," he said in a deep rich voice, and instantly every eye was fixed upon him; "the heart of The Serpent is full of light, as are the clearings when the sun shines from behind the clouds. You loved Black Bear, our great chieftain, and you love me; therefore the heart of The Serpent is full of light, and he is glad.

"Brothers, The Serpent is a warrior like you, but he is no greater than you. He is no braver; he fights by your side; he does not fight at your head, as did Black Bear."

It must be said at this point that The Serpent's modesty prevented him doing himself justice. Even Black Bear had not shown such conspicuous bravery as Gauma or The Serpent. So marked indeed was his courage that it looked like hypocrisy on his part to deny it; but his object was a deeper one than of warding off the compliments of his friends.

"Brothers," he continued, "The Serpent is

no braver than The Buffalo, The Antelope, Rolling Thunder, The Panther, or Ap-to-to."

As the orator uttered each of these names, he indicated them by his finger, making a little extra gesture when he pointed out the last. There was a series of grunts and shakes of the heads by way of protest, and those who were named were the most vigorous in parrying the compliments.

"Brothers, you shut your eyes to many things. Our chief must be brave like Black Bear, and he must be wise like him, for bravery without wisdom is like the buffalo bull when the wolves have torn out his eyes. He will fight hard, but he can not see where to drive his horns.

"Brothers, Ap-to-to has the eyes of the eagle; he can see further than The Serpent or The Buffalo, or The Antelope or Rolling Thunder: he must be your chief."

The speaker saw the storm he was raising. It may be said that he was springing Ap-to-to's candidacy upon them too soon: they needed to be educated up to the point of acceptance.

But The Serpent had uncovered his battery, and he could do nothing less than fire it.

"My brothers, if you love The Serpent, listen to his words. Do you not love the memory of Black Bear?"

The response to this was enough to make that old chieftain smile in his grave.

"Then, brothers, listen, for The Serpent now speaks the words of Black Bear. He loved Ap-to-to, for he knew the Great Spirit meant he should be chief of the Winnebagoes; he said so often; could he speak now those would be his words."

This was a telling thrust, and it produced its effect. Ap-to-to seemed aware that it was his strongest weapon. None of the hearers could doubt that what the Serpent said was the truth, and that for some reason, which the rest could not explain, Black Bear always had a partiality for Ap-to-to.

A thrill of pleasure went through the heart of the wily schemer, for it was plain enough that The Serpent was his friend, and meant to insist on his choice for the chieftaincy. If he should do so it must be decisive.

You would have smiled, could you have been present to watch the next step in the proceedings of this singular meeting. You know that at many of our political gatherings the orator is often interrupted by some one who desires to ask him a question. Precisely the same thing now took place. The warrior known as Rolling Thunder said :

“ When the fight was hot this morning, and the Long Knives were falling like leaves in the autumn wind, where was The Serpent ? ”

“ By the side of my brothers,” replied the speaker, who saw what was coming.

“ The Serpent was not at our side ; he was at our *head* ; will my brother tell me where was Ap-to-to ? ”

“ The heart of The Serpent is glad, for he can speak to his brothers. He will tell them truths which will open their eyes wider than when the Great Spirit speaks from the sky.

“ Brothers, you ask me where Ap-to-to was, when the fight was going on around the cabins of the Long Knives. I will tell you.

“ Brothers, who is the most terrible enemy of the red men ! He is not a Long Knife ; he

is one whose skin is red like ours; he is a Shawanoe and his name is Deerfoot.

"When The Serpent was fighting with his brothers, Ap-to-to was hurrying to join them. Among the hills he came face to face with the panther they call Deerfoot. He was painted like a Winnebago, and some of our warriors thought he was a friend; he was more subtle than they. He closed all their eyes but those of Ap-to-to."

"Brothers, Ap-to-to met the Shawanoe, and he would have torn the scalp from his head, had not the Shawanoe, who runs faster than the antelope, fled in terror before him. Deerfoot fears no one but Ap-to-to; when he sees Ap-to-to he runs as does the fawn before the wolves."

Now, I am sure I need not tell you that this story of The Serpent was one of the most outrageous yarns that a writer of romance could have put together. Among all the Winnebagoes there was not one who held Deerfoot in such dread as did the warrior who was so anxious to step into the moccasins of Black Bear.

But the story of the audacious Serpent was believed by every one of his hearers, except Ap-to-to himself. He knew he had no right to the glory thus given to him, but it was so well put by his friend that the scamp began to wonder whether after all there was not a grain of truth in it. It must be, thought Ap-to-to, that he was a better man than those who knew him best believed him to be.

"Brothers," resumed The Serpent, seeing how truly he had struck the mark, "why did not Ap-to-to tell you the reason he could not be where his heart was—with us in the fight? He was fighting a worse foe than the Long Knives. When the Shawanoe ran, then Ap-to-to turned to join us, but the battle was ended."

Had The Serpent told the exact truth, he would have said that the individual under discussion took good care not to hasten to join the rest until the contest was over. But the pleader chose to put the silence of Ap-to-to to the credit of the most worthy of all motives—his modesty.

"Brothers, Black Bear loved Ap-to-to be-

cause he knew him better than we. He wanted him to be chieftain ; Black Bear never wanted The Serpent to be a leader of his braves. Had Black Bear said so, then would The Serpent be glad to be your chief ; but we all love Black Bear too much to do that which would displease him.

"Brothers, The Serpent can not be your chief ; Ap-to-to *must* be. If you think as does The Serpent, cheer his heart by saying so."

The shrewd orator had won the victory, and he proved his tact by seizing its fruits without delay. Had he waited until the feeling had subsided, a discussion would have followed, full of danger to the project The Serpent had in mind. Instead, therefore, of joining in a council to consider the matter, as was the almost invariable rule among the Indians, he wound up his oration by putting the question to a vote.

The response was unanimous. Every warrior signified his wish to follow the counsel of Black Bear and The Serpent. Ap-to-to became war chief of the Winnebagoes so suddenly that it almost took away his breath.

The sharp political work was done by The Serpent alone, and without him it never could have been accomplished. Having been elected it devolved upon Ap-to-to to thank his constituents for the honor, and he did it with no little skill.

"Brothers, the heart of Ap-to-to bounds with joy, and he asks the Great Spirit to make him worthy to lead you as Black Bear has done so many times. The Serpent is better fitted to be your chief than is Ap-to-to, but he will not consent. Ap-to-to will try to emulate the bravery and virtues not only of Black Bear but of The Serpent."

The Serpent had scored his first point, but how about the second and decisive one?

CHAPTER XXIX.

"EDITH WAS SURE SHE DISTINGUISHED THE
FAINT OUTLINES OF AN INDIAN WARRIOR."

YOU know enough about the political history of our country to recall that when two leading candidates are before a convention for nomination, and one of them withdraws in favor of the other, the latter, in case of his own election, is quite sure to remember his sacrificing friend in making up his cabinet or in distributing the choicest plums of patronage.

So it would seem that Ap-to-to, knowing in his owl heart that his election was due solely to the grace of The Serpent, would be more than glad to do any thing he could for him. When I tell you that that was the very thing for which The Serpent had striven from the first, you will see the line of policy which he adopted without explaining at the time he was

holding converse with the Moravian and Deer-foot.

But with the subtlety of his nature The Serpent waited before pushing his advantage. He joined with the others in congratulating the new chieftain and there was a general smoking of pipes, and conversation for a full hour.

From the moment of The Serpent's arrival in camp he had not shown any attention to the three captives who were still sitting upon the fallen tree, occasionally exchanging a few words, and feeling a languid interest in the strife for the selection of a chief.

It was not necessary that The Serpent should manifest any interest in the hapless prisoners. He could not help observing them now and then as he moved to and fro. On their part it could not be expected that they should have any idea of the plot that had been formed for their benefit.

By and by matters cooled down, as may be said. The Serpent found the means of taking Ap-to-to to one side for a little private conversation. Several observed it, but since there

was nothing inappropriate in the proceeding, they took care not to interrupt the speakers.

A liberal interpretation of the conversation may be given :

"Gauma, you did Ap-to-to the greatest favor of his life."

"The Serpent made Ap-to-to war chief of the Winnebagoes ; but for him he never would have been chosen."

"My brother is right. Can Ap-to-to do any thing to prove his love for The Serpent ?"

"He can."

"Tell Ap-to-to what it is."

"The chief Ap-to-to has three Long Knives in his captivity."

"Yonder they sit on the fallen tree," said the chief, turning his head as though afraid they had slipped away during the late excitement. "We shall take them to the villages. The squaws shall become the slaves of our squaws, and the warrior shall run the gauntlet, and then we will burn him to a tree."

"That is good."

"Does my brother want to burn now ?

If he does, the wish of his heart shall be gratified."

The Serpent looked steadily at the little group seated on the log, as though he was half disposed to claim the favor promised, but he shook his head.

"No; but Ap-to-to did not make them captive; it was The Serpent who led the way."

"The Serpent speaks words that are true."

"The Serpent asks the chief to give him the captives."

"What will my brother do with them?" asked Ap-to-to, plainly surprised by the request.

"He will take them with him through the wood to The Serpent's encampment. Then when we reach our lodges the five captives will be with Ap-to-to as well as with The Serpent and his warriors."

Now, this may seem to have been a slight request, but it was manifest that Ap-to-to was much opposed to granting it. Among his warriors were a number who had taken part in the brilliant raid already described, and to them

the transfer of the captives to the other party would be without reason. Possibly they might not make objection if they believed the change was honestly intended, but Ap-to-to suspected that his loyal subject meant to give all three over to torture at the hands of the other company.

However, you can well understand the desire of the new chief to please The Serpent, for he knew that if this doughty follower should wish to do so he could go behind the returns, overthrow the election, have Ap-to-to deposed and himself chosen in his place.

The Serpent saw the hesitation of the chieftain and suspected its meaning, but refrained from letting it be seen that he thought any thing of it. Instead of looking in Ap-to-to's face, as was his custom when talking with him, he seemed to be interested in a group of smoking Winnebagoes on the other side of the fire.

"When does The Serpent wish to take away the captives?" asked Ap-to-to, as though he was willing to grant the request.

The Serpent, as you can well see, wanted

above every thing to take them with him at once, for the hours were beyond value. If he could guide them back to the spot where their anxious friends were waiting, the journey to the settlement could be pushed so vigorously that it would be reached shortly after sunrise and before the Winnebagoes could take any steps in the way of pursuit.

Between the evening and daylight fatal complications were likely to arise. Nevertheless, The Serpent kept his head. The hesitation of Ap-to-to, slight though it was, awakened a misgiving that increased his caution.

"Ap-to-to is chief. He shall say."

"It shall be as The Serpent wishes. At the rising of the sun the captives shall be his."

This gave the permission asked, but the delay must not be permitted.

Affecting to be pleased with the permission, The Serpent talked of other matters, and by-and-by sauntered off among the other warriors. He was held in such high esteem by all that he was welcome wherever he went and was treated with consideration.

During his strolling to and fro The Serpent passed near the captives, looking at them with such close attention that the three noticed it.

"What a fine-looking warrior," said Linden in an undertone to his wife and daughter, between whom he was sitting.

"He is the Winnebago who joined them a little while ago," replied the wife, she having been a close observer of the proceedings. "He made the speech which caused so much excitement."

"Yes, father said his speech was in favor of Ap-to-to, who wanted to be chief."

"So it seems to me, though I may be wrong. You know the Indians use a great many gestures, and their looks helped me to understand the meaning of all this rumpus."

"I wonder why he is so much interested in us?" was the wondering remark of the wife.

"He has stopped over there again and looks as though he would like to say something."

"If he wanted to say it, what is there to hinder him?"

"Perhaps he can't speak English."

"There must be some of the warriors who know enough to translate his words, that is, if he desires to say any thing, which I don't believe is likely. There!" exclaimed the pioneer, "I knew I had seen that fellow before. He was the leader of the band that burst through our door and gave us such a fright."

"I recognized him while he was making his speech," said his wife, "and supposed that you did also."

"Well, there is only one warrior that's his equal in that kind of business, and that's Deerfoot."

"But Deerfoot isn't nearly as large or strong as he," ventured Edith.

"That may be, but he is lightning itself in a fight. A man that can strike hard enough to bury his knife in your body, strikes hard enough for all purposes, and his blow is as effective as if made by one of double his strength. It's quickness that counts in this dreadful work. If Deerfoot and that fine-looking warrior were set against each other, the Shawanoe would kill him in the twinkling of an eye."

"But suppose the Winnebago should catch the Shawanoe in his grasp!"

"Ah," said the father, with a smile, "you are supposing that which is unsupposable. But where has our friend gone?"

The three turned their heads in different directions, and scrutinized each warrior in turn, until quite sure they had seen all. But among them was not the one in whom they had become so interested.

"We shall find him before long ——"

"*Sh!*" whispered Edith, "I think I see him!"

She was looking directly behind her, out among the trees where every thing was shrouded in impenetrable darkness. Some one had stirred the big mass of sticks burning in the open space so that they threw a glow a little further into the gloom than before. The gleam of the water was plainly seen in one direction, while the features of most of the warriors, as they lolled on the ground, were as distinct as at noon tide.

Beside the trunk of a large oak several yards to the rear of the prostrate tree on which

the captives were sitting. Edith was sure she distinguished the faint outlines of an Indian warrior. The light was too dim for her to make out the form, but she was convinced that it was the tall Winnebago, and that he was studying them with a closeness for which they could not account, and which filled all with unspeakable dread.

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CHAPTER XXX.

"THEY'LL GIVE THE SERPENT AN ESCORT."

YOU can understand how trying was the situation of our three friends sitting on the fallen tree. They were on what may be called the outer rim of the circle of light thrown out by the camp-fire, so that while looking behind them, they could see only a very short distance into the forest. But when Edith told her father and mother about the strange figure, they also observed it.

Remembering The Serpent as the leader of the band which burst with fury into the cabin, it was inevitable that the captives should regard him as a mortal enemy. Indeed the belief was that his hatred was so venomous that he was seeking a chance to deal them some treacherous blow before the arrival of the party at their villages.

How strange would have been the emotions

of the three, had they but known that the presence of the warrior in the camp was for the purpose of befriending them!

Linden became so uneasy that he was on the point of proposing that they should leave the log and approach closer to the fire, when Edith said that the Indian was gone. He was certainly invisible, though it was doubtful whether he had done more than merely shift his position. So the captives kept glancing behind them until half an hour had passed, and they could see nothing more of the Indian. Then they agreed that he had left the neighborhood.

Yes; The Serpent had departed. While Linden and his fellow-captives were peering into the gloom behind him, he walked over to Ap-to-to and said he would go to his own camp, returning at daylight for the prisoners.

Had he pressed his request, The Serpent could have gained permission to bind the arms of the captives, and to take them with him, without waiting for daylight. Unfortunately the warrior's excessive caution prevented him making the request.

The Serpent had no thought of going to his own camp, though the distance was not great, and he could have done his own cause service by the journey. But his anxiety now was to see his new friends. The delicate business for which he had already risked his life had reached the point where he needed the counsel of the sagacious Shawanoe. Indeed the Winnebago was determined to go no further without help or device from him.

Thus it came about that within a short time after his withdrawal from the camp, The Serpent joined the Moravian and the Shawanoe, who were waiting for him near the deserted camp of the Winnebagoes. Since the business had now reached a point in which it was safe to consult all, the three, after talking a few minutes moved further back along the trail until they reached the rest, who, you need not be told, were in a flutter of expectancy.

It would have been unwise to start a fire, even though The Serpent assured them that none of the Winnebagoes was coming in that direction. So the party stepped aside until they found an open space where there was

enough moonlight for them to dimly see each other's forms.

Here they sat on the ground close together, and held the most important conversation of their lives.

First of all, the Moravian interpreted the remarkable story of The Serpent. The fact that he had been promised the custody of the captives at daylight stirred the hearts of every one, and sent such a thrill of hope through poor Fred Linden that for a minute or so he was too faint to speak.

"It is wonderful! wonderful!" said the missionary in an awed voice; I never have known of any thing so amazing; the hand of God is so plain in it that who shall fail to give Him praise? I am growing to be an old man, and I have been a humble follower of Him from boyhood, but never were His mercies and goodness so clear to me as they are this minute. Thanks be to Him! thanks be to Him!"

The last ejaculations were uttered with a bowed head and in a low voice, showing that they came from an overflowing heart. But

all heard the words, and every heart echoed the thanks.

"But," said Bowlby, "in the general hurrahing we mustn't forget one thing — which the same is that George Linden and his wife and darter are with the Injuns yet."

"Ye are corricet," said Terry Clark, whose whole being throbbed with hope; "but the same are in much better shape than they was before."

"That's all true," remarked Hardin, the others listening to every word; "and, as the dominie says, the exploit of The Serpent is simply wonderful. Twelve hours ago he was a raging wildcat in his efforts to take our lives; now he is risking his own to save those whom he sought to destroy. To me it is marvelous—it is miraculous."

"It is the hand of God, with whom nothing is impossible," said the Moravian; "but," arousing to the situation, "we must not forget that much yet remains to be done before they can be safely plucked from the danger. It may be that He means to bring them thus close to deliverance, but will not allow them

to be saved. We must not lay aside our armor until our work is done."

During the early part of the conversation, which of course was unintelligible to The Serpent, though the Moravian occasionally interpreted a word, the two Indians were silent. More than once the others looked through the gloom at the graceful figure reclining on the ground close to the Winnebago, but he remained still. Every one felt that with him rested the decision as to the line of action to be adopted.

But Deerfoot was not ready to speak. He would do so when he thought best, and it was idle to try to force him.

"My friends," said the missionary, addressing himself directly to the work before them, "the situation, though more hopeful than we ever dared to expect, is attended by much danger, and more than one complication is likely to arise. First of all, there is a danger which The Serpent doesn't seem to see as plainly as I do. The two Winnebago camps are within such easy distance of each other that it is quite probable other messengers will

pass back and forth before morning. The Serpent has done so, and why should not some one else do the same! If a single one of the Winnebagoes crosses through the woods to the other camp-fire, the startling act of The Serpent must become known, and then, as you can see, scarcely a hope remains."

"There is truth in what you say," remarked Hardin; "and it strikes me that while we are talking, The Serpent ought to go to his own camp and take steps to prevent any of his own warriors leaving to visit Ap-to-to."

"You hear that, Deerfoot," said the Moravian, turning toward the Shawanoe; "what do you think of that?"

"The words of my father are wise."

Changing to the Winnebago tongue, he told The Serpent that he had already waited too long before performing that duty. The warrior proved his confidence in the judgment of his friend by leaping to his feet and plunging into the wood without a word.

"Begorrah, but whin the swate-looking gintleman makes up his mind it don't take him long to act," laughed Terry, "which was

the remark they used to make about me grandfather when he was invited to take something that wasn't exactly wather."

"He won't be gone a great while," said the missionary; "for he is eager to be with us and to learn our conclusion. So long as he is unsuspected he can do the work which even Deerfoot dare not undertake."

"You spoke of other complications," said Fred Linden, who was anxious to get a true idea of the situation.

"If the decision of Ap-to-to becomes known—and I can't see why it should not—some of the other warriors may object. You know that it will be a great honor to carry five prisoners back to their villages, for I don't believe the Winnebagoes ever secured so many white captives at one time before. Some of Ap-to-to's men have helped to capture them, and they will not be willing that it should appear that the entire glory belongs to The Serpent and his party."

At this point Deerfoot interrupted the Moravian to remind him that the arrangement of the two wings of the Winnebagoes was that

they might unite long before reaching the lodges.

"I think The Serpent did tell me that, but it had slipped from my memory. The peril from that cause, then, is not so great as I thought. Still there *is* peril," insisted the good man, "for when The Serpent was asked for his reason, he could not refuse to answer, and what should he say? He couldn't say any thing that would satisfy them, for the request is so singular that the only sufficient explanation is the true one."

"That, however, is a difficulty which would have to be met under any circumstances," said Linden.

"Yes; the delay can not affect that point one way or the other."

"I've been thinking," remarked Bowlby, "that when The Serpent starts through the woods with George and the rest, that is if he ever does start, that twisted-nosed Ap-to-to won't be so *apt to do* half what is expected of him."

This was the only occasion ever known wherein the hunter tried that sort of witticism.

Having committed it, he waited a minute to see how it was received, but not a single person, not even Terry Clark, gave it the least notice. So, without daring to call attention to it, the hunter continued :

"They'il give The Serpent an escort to make sure that the folks don't get away from him on the road."

"They will give him an escort, but not for that," said the Moravian ; "but to see that The Serpent doesn't put them to death before reaching his own camp."

"And that'll make more trouble," was the disgusted remark of Hardin, who began to feel that, after all, the outlook was not so rosy as it seemed a short time before.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"HE SAW A WARRIOR EMERGE FROM THE GLOOM."

DISCUSSING the critical situation in low voices, the little party of whites saw that despite the astonishing success of The Serpent, there was after all little ground for hope. If the warrior should be allowed to take charge of the captives in order to lead them through the wood to his own camp, he would be accompanied by an escort of Winnebagoes, that, as it seemed to Hardin, would neutralize every advantage gained by The Serpent.

The hunter added, "That's enough to shut us out."

"Yas, I don't see as we can do any thing," added Bowlby, quick to feel the gloom that was settling over the rest.

Deerfoot, who was reclining on one elbow, straightened up as if a knife had pricked his body and demanded in a sharp voice:

"Where then will Deerfoot and his brother be?"

The question was the sharpest sort of reproof, signifying that the matter of an escort was of little account. Could not Deerfoot and the whites dispose of two or three or even more warriors sent by Ap-to-to to help The Serpent conduct the party a short distance through the woods?"

Bowlby shifted his position so as to bring him a little closer to the Shawanoe, and extending his hand, said:

"Shake!"

Deerfoot warmly returned the pressure of his impulsive friend.

Hank Grubbens, who had not opened his mouth since the council began, thought it time that he gave the others the advantage of some of his choice wisdom.

"I was jist on the p'int of sayin' that I hoped they would send an escort along so as to let us have a little fun."

"What fun would it be to *you*?" was the demand of Hardin; "you would be the first to run."

"Of course I would—*after* the varmints, as I always have done," responded Hank with a laugh for which no one else saw the occasion.

"In the Beaver Moon (November), when the geese fly towards the south, we hear them honking high in air," said Deerfoot; "their voices sound like that which is still in our ears."

This sally was so appropriate that every one, including Fred Linden and excepting Hank Grubbens, laughed more heartily than they had done since morning.

Grubbens's voice had a twang, which resembled the cry of the goose. The man was one of those cowards whom Deerfoot despised, but whom he would have let alone, had he not tried to figure as a hero. It may be doubted whether any character was more displeasing to the Shawanoe than the one I have named. Only a strong disgust could have led him to utter the direct reproof which he did.

Grubbens was angered. Had there been enough light to reveal his face, it would have been seen to flush almost to the color of his hair. Had he dared, he would have attacked

Deerfoot for the insult. He thought it safe, however, to use his tongue.

"It's all easy enough for a redskin like you to talk when you're among friends, but if ever I catch you alone I'll make you pay for this," was the audacious remark of Grubbens, a remark which caused the others to smile again.

"If you're anxious for a tussle with Deerfoot, we'll all step aside and let you have it out," suggested Bowlby.

"This ain't the time or place," said the boaster, "'cause we've got more important matters on hand, but *I'll remember it!* I won't take any apology either from the scamp."

Deerfoot of course heard all this, but he did not make any answer. He was reclining on the ground as though his thoughts were elsewhere.

The Moravian did not like the unseemly wrangling, but there was enough human nature in his composition to enjoy the discomforture of the boaster, and so he forced himself to remain quiet for a minute or two longer.

"A WARRIOR EMERGED FROM THE GLOOM." 307

Observing that the Shawanoe did not make any reply to his taunts, Grubbens was encouraged to venture further.

"I've heard a good deal about Deerfoot being so mighty smart, but I never seed any thing of it. If he ever runs across my path, he'll be mighty sorry——"

Still the young Shawanoe did not move or speak. His contempt for the man was such that nothing that he might say could move him, and he would not so much as show that he heard him.

But Bowlby could not restrain his waggery. Leaning over so as to bring his mouth close to the ear of Grubbens, he whispered with much excitement of manner:

"Have you noticed that Deerfoot has drawn his knife and is goin' for yer scalp?"

Grubbens was so terror-stricken that he stopped short and was on the point of darting among the trees to escape the wrath of the warrior whom he dreaded like death itself: but changing his mind he said in a husky, tremulous voice:

"Gracious! Bowlby, I was jest in fun! J

didn't mean nothin' ; explain to him, won't you ? This ain't no time for fightin' ! ”

The laugh which followed this terrified appeal, and which was heard by all, told Grubbens of the joke played on him ; but it was too late to withdraw what he had said and he could only bear his chagrin in silence.

The quiet mirth had hardly subsided when Deerfoot came to the sitting position with a warning “ *Sh !* ”

Every one listened, but if the Shawanoe heard any thing he was the only one who did so. After a minute of silence the Moravian was about to speak, when Deerfoot repeated the warning, and in the gloom was seen to raise his hand to emphasize his command.

Still nothing was heard, and the Shawanoe rose quietly to his feet. At that moment each caught a faint rustle somewhere along the trail which they had left a short time before. Deerfoot did not move, but stood in the attitude of attention until the slight sound ceased.

“ It must be The Serpent,” whispered the missionary, “ though it seems to me he has

"A WARRIOR EMERGED FROM THE GLOOM." 309

hardly had time to go to his camp and back again."

"If it's him," was the remark of Bowlby, "why don't he show himself?"

"He may have missed us," replied Hardin; "the fact is I don't see how he could help doing so."

Deerfoot again signed for silence. At the same time he emitted one of his low, cautious whistles, hardly more than the tremulous call of some night bird.

There was no response, and he glided softly forward through the gloom toward the trail. He had believed at first that it was their Winne-
go friend; but in obedience to a doubt that rose when his signal brought no response he set out to learn the truth.

The occasion proved one of those rare ones in which the wonderful young warrior made a blunder. He ought to have known from the brief time that had passed since the departure of The Serpent that he could not have gone to his camp and returned. Deerfoot reproved himself for waiting until the person, whoever he might be, had gone by; but he was still

hopeful that he was early enough to overtake the stranger and bring him to account.

But the signal which he had emitted proved to be the greatest blunder of all; for not only did the stranger refuse to answer it, but he was warned thereby to take the very precautions of which he would not have seen the need but for the warning.

Thus it was that listen as closely as he could, and move as silently as he might, the Shawanoe could see and hear nothing of the individual who he was certain was an enemy.

The deserted camp was but a short distance away, and a couple of minutes brought him in sight of the handful of brands burning among the ashes.

Between the Shawanoe and the glowing embers of the ground suddenly loomed a grotesque shadow. A man was moving away from the watcher, and in the direction of the Winnebago camp beyond. His soft moccasins made no noise, and he was hardly seen when he vanished on the other side.

Deerfoot bounded as lightly as a fawn after him. Though he, too, moved without sound,

some perverse fate must have caused the one in advance to turn his head, after entering the gloom, and just at the moment the Shawanoe's form was revealed for an instant in the dim firelight. It was enough for the stranger, who, favored by the impenetrable shadows among the trees, slipped from view as utterly as if he had dropped a thousand miles toward the center of the earth.

But though Deerfoot found it impossible to locate him by aid of ear or eye, he could not doubt his destination. He was making for Ap-to-to's camp, and he must be prevented at all hazards from reaching it.

The theory of the pursuer was that the Indian had stopped moving, intending to remain motionless behind some tree until he believed that the eavesdropper had passed. Then he would resume his flight as noiselessly as before.

This stealth of movement was likely to continue until some distance from the spot, when he would hasten his steps, though not likely to forget his caution. Instead, therefore, of waiting where he was, Deerfoot stole along,

never stopping until in sight of the Winnebago camp-fire. Then he came to a halt, confident that his man would betray himself before coming within reach.

Ten minutes perhaps had passed and Deerfoot still listened, with his eyes upon the strange group around the camp-fire, hopeful of outwitting the dusky miscreant after all. Looking steadily at the flames, he saw a warrior emerge from the gloom on the opposite side and join the Winnebagoes, who looked at him in a way that showed he was a new arrival.

And then it was that Deerfoot realized he had been outwitted. The warrior for whom he was watching had quietly eluded him by circling around to one side, so as to approach the camp from a point opposite to that where the Shawanoe was waiting for him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"HE PLAYED HIS PART WELL."

DEERFOOT saw that he had made one of the most inexcusable mistakes of his life, and that there was but one way of remedying it: that was to shoot the warrior who carried the fatal knowledge before he could impart it to Ap-to-to or any of his warriors. That would close the mouth of the Winnebago forever, and save the captives.

But you can understand why the Shawanoe shrank from such an act. His tomahawk, his knife, his bow and arrow and his rifle had brought many an antagonist low, but it had always been in fair contest. He had never played the sneak, he had never been guilty of treachery, and he had never taken life wantonly.

It could not be said that it would be a wanton crime if he should bring down the messen-

ger, for more precious lives than his required that his voice should be silenced; but the trouble lay in the fact that the warrior was an innocent agent. He had not come into Ap-to-to's camp for the purpose of playing the traitor to his leader. If he was to tell that the two captives of the other band had been taken away by The Serpent (as he was absolutely certain to do, if not prevented), it would be only the natural thing for him to do. He could not be blamed, although his announcement would insure the death of George Linden, his wife and his daughter.

While the story of the new arrival might be told in full, it would not necessarily make known the plot which The Serpent had formed. The belief would be that the daring brave had put the two captives to death out of pure fiendishness. That being the case, Ap-to-to and his warriors, despite the popularity of the Serpent, would take good care that no chance was given him to massacre the others.

These thoughts ran through the brain of the chagrined Deerfoot, who stood far enough

back in the gloom to be invisible, while he kept his eye on the new arrival. The latter did not seem to cause any special commotion, for there was no reason why he should. He was a well-known warrior whose camp was not far off, and it was not expected that he brought any news of importance.

Closely watching his actions, Deerfoot could read almost every word that fell from his lips. He saw him exchange greetings with several, most of whom were lolling on the ground, though three of the Winnebagoes—one being Ap-to-to—were seated on a fallen tree that was almost opposite to where the captives were doing what they could to console each other in the hour of sorrow.

After the messenger, if such he may be called, had talked to his friends in this aimless manner for some minutes, he sauntered in the direction of the chief. As he did so he glanced about him in a way which told Deerfoot that he was looking for The Serpent, and probably wondering why he was not visible.

In walking toward the chieftain the Winnebago passed in front of the Lindens seated on the log. It was natural that he should turn his head aside to look at them; but his sudden stop and the quick flirt of his head made known the alarming truth: he missed the other two captives, and for the first time discovered that they had never reached the camp of Ap-to-to.

The warrior moved a step nearer the hapless group, as if to assure himself that he had made no mistake. No; there were only three instead of the five he expected to see.

He now strolled toward the chieftain, glancing over his shoulder while doing so as if to guard against every possible blunder. No; there was none, and he continued drawing near the chieftain.

The critical moment had come. The fatal secret was about to be told unless the only method possible was taken to seal the lips of him who carried that secret.

Deerfoot held his rifle with the hammer raised, but he did not bring the weapon to his

shoulder. His nature rebelled at doing the deed. He could not slay the innocent warrior.

The latter had made a half military salute, for he had learned from the others of the election of Ap-to-to, and then he spoke a few words. Doubtless they were words of congratulation, before the query should be asked respecting the missing captives, to be followed by the revelation that would set all by the ears.

No ; Deerfoot could not shoot the Indian. A voice within him whispered that it would be wrong. He lowered the flint of his rifle but kept his eyes on the warrior. He saw him talking, and then he turned his head toward the log where the captives sat. He was on the point of asking the fearful question !

But before it could take shape on the dusky lips, he flung his arms aloft with a ringing screech and tumbled over dead, killed by a bullet through his skull.

Deerfoot did not fire the shot, but he knew who did. It sounded a little to his right and less than a hundred feet away. The Shawanoe needed no one to tell him that the hurried

steps which he heard a moment later were those of The Serpent.

Such was the fact. The latter, having delayed his return to his own camp, did what he could to retrieve the mistake by going at his highest speed through the woods. Arriving there, he was chagrined to find that one of his warriors had set out to visit Ap-to-to's camp, with no purpose except to make a friendly call.

The Serpent saw that the situation was desperate. Unless the warrior could be headed off, the game was up. Telling his men that under no circumstances was a single one of them to leave, he set out to overtake the red man who had departed only a short time before.

An insurmountable difficulty lay in the path. He could form no idea of the course taken by the other, and all the signals which The Serpent emitted were unanswered. With that daring which had always been a characteristic of him, The Serpent then made straight for Ap-to-to's camp, in the hope of arriving there ahead of his man. If he could do that

he would be able to shoot him before he could reveal anything. The Serpent did not feel any of the sensitiveness that restrained the arm of the Shawanoe.

By exerting himself to the utmost the Winnebago reached the camp of the chieftain only a few minutes behind the warrior whom he was so anxious to overtake. Knowing, like Deerfoot, the momentous news carried by this savage, The Serpent could also interpret his words as plainly as if he heard them.

At the critical moment, he fired, shooting down one of his own men with no more compunction than he would have felt in slaying the Moravian missionary a few hours before.

Deerfoot did not turn to flee as did The Serpent immediately on firing the fatal shot; he waited awhile to observe the effect it produced on the others.

The Winnebagoes, like all of their race, were too much accustomed to scenes of violence to feel any of that awe which would have been inspired among white men by such a catastrophe. There was some excitement, and several warriors hastened in the direction

whence came the bullet. These were brave and were eager to find the foe that had dared to do such a thing.

The body of the red man was allowed to lie where it had fallen while Ap-to-to and his braves discussed what had taken place. Their faces were frequently turned toward the point whence the shot had come and the reflection of the firelight on their painted visages made the scene striking and impressive.

No parties around the camp-fire were more startled than were George Linden and his wife and daughter. All three happened to be looking at the new arrival when he fell, and the spiteful crack of the rifle sounded closer to them than to Deerfoot.

The whole thing was inexplicable to the Lindens, as it must have been to every one of the Winnebagoes, who could not guess any reason why this particular warrior should have been dispatched. It would seem that if any Indian was selected as a victim it would have been Ap-to-to, the chieftain.

It isn't worth while to put on record the guesses of Linden and his relatives, who of

course could not imagine the truth. Edith insisted that the ball had been aimed at Ap-to-to, and that the other was hit by mistake. Since the two stood nearly in a line with the shot, Linden was disposed to accept this theory, though it could not explain why any friend should have wished to pick off even the chieftain when it could not possibly help the captives.

Deerfoot was on the point of withdrawing when he quietly smiled as he observed, among the warriors returning from their brief search in the woods, The Serpent himself. He played his part well, for, after all, it was not difficult to do so. He asked many questions, walked to where the lifeless body lay, looked at it as though searching for some clue to the author of the dastardly deed, and then he repeated that either Deerfoot the Shawanoe or some of the pioneers had followed them on their tramp, and, recognizing the Winnebago as one who had been especially aggressive during the morning, had adopted this means of revenge.

Since this was the explanation which Ap-
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to-to and all the warriors had agreed upon, I need not tell you that no one suspected that The Serpent had had a hand in the taking off of the victim.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

ONE—TWO—THREE—ALL OF THEM.

THE whole matter being clear to Deerfoot, he deemed it best to make his way back to his friends, who, as may well be supposed, were on the tiptoe of expectation.

The sound of the rifle, followed by the death-shriek of the Indian, had been heard by them, and not one could imagine the cause. You can well believe how interested they were in the narrative told by Deerfoot.

"By gracious!" exclaimed Hardin, in an awed undertone, "but that was a close call for The Serpent. Deerfoot says he shot down one of his own men while in the very act of telling the secret that would have ended all hope for George and his folks."

"Thar can't be no doubt about *that*," assented Bowlby, "for Deerfoot *says so*."

"I should like to know how *he* can tell," growled Hank Grubbens; "he wasn't near enough to hear what was said."

"But he had the help of that which you'll never have," replied Hardin, "and that's brains."

"It's bosh."

"Yes—your brains are."

"There can be no question that The Serpent is right," said the Moravian, in his soothing manner; "he is an unusually sagacious Indian, and, as I have before remarked, he comes nearer to Deerfoot in that respect than does any one I ever met; but it would not have taken a very wise red man to interpret the words of the Winnebago by his actions."

Fred Linden shuddered to think how narrowly his folks had been saved for the time, and he grew faint at heart to recall that the final saving of their lives was a problem whose solution was frightfully uncertain.

"I've been thinking," said Terry Clark, when a lull occurred in the conversation, "that there's a little difficulty in the road which ye haven't noticed, as a friend of me

own observed when he fell over an illi-phant."

"What's that?" asked Hardin.

"Mr. Linden and the others haven't any idea that The Serpent is a friend of theirs and they may make him trouble."

"My brother speaks the truth," said the Shawanoe; "Deerfoot has thought of what his brother says, but he sees how the trouble can be made less."

"That's enough then," remarked Bowlby, in his own emphatic manner; "if Deerfoot has it fixed in his mind, it will be made straight in time to save from bother."

"I'm satisfied," assented Terry.

"I guess we all are," said Hardin, "unless it's Grubbens there."

"Let Grubbens alone," said the missionary; "we have had enough of that talk."

All felt the rebuke and held their peace, though Grubbens was heard muttering something which no one understood or cared to understand.

It was clear that no attempt would be made to remove the captives until morning, and our

friends had nothing to do except to content themselves in waiting as best they could.

"I wonder whether The Serpent will not make us another visit," said the missionary, inquiringly, to Deerfoot.

"He will be here before the rising of the sun," was the reply of the Shawanoe; "he is coming now."

No one else heard the faint footfalls which apprised the Shawanoe of the approach of the very party who was in their minds, but every one knew he was right.

A few seconds later, a soft signal was detected, as if some one was in doubt about the right course to follow. This was responded to by Deerfoot, who had risen to his feet, and then The Serpent appeared among the little group as though he had risen from the very ground.

The Serpent's story was a brief one. He told his friends what they already knew, that Ap-to-to and his warriors believed the shot which laid low the Winnebago was fired either by Deerfoot or one of the settlers, who had been hovering in the woods, and who had

some personal grievance against the victim. The result was that a great deal of care had been taken to guard against a repetition of the act. A number of sentinels were stationed at such a distance from the camp among the trees that it would be hard for one to approach close enough to do harm.

Nothing had been said about The Serpent taking the three captives to his own party, but he added that he should insist on Ap-to-to fulfilling his pledge, threatening him, in case of refusal, to take steps to have him deposed from his chieftainship. Ap-to-to could not fail to know, from the proceedings of the night before, that The Serpent would be sure to succeed in such a move, and he would stop at nothing to prevent the culmination of such a disgrace, tenfold worse than if he had never received the honor at all.

He suspected the warriors would think he meant to slay his prisoners, but he would give his promise that nothing of the kind was contemplated. He preferred that the pale-faces should be left in his charge, but, if an escort was insisted upon, he agreed with Deerfoot

that it was not prudent to make too strong objection.

The Serpent had given out that he must go back to his camp but would return before morning. He stayed with his friends until the time was just enough to allow the journey to be made, when he once more and for the last time bade them good-by.

Previous to going, he and Deerfoot talked a good while together, for now that the crisis was at hand it was necessary that a full understanding should exist between them. Some exceedingly fine work had to be done, and more than likely success would depend upon trifling movements which would not be thought of by others possessing less of the amazing skill that belonged to these fine specimens of the American race.

The Serpent made known to Deerfoot the route he intended to take with his party. He would start toward his own camp, his warriors having been instructed to await his coming, but would gradually tend to the south, and, at a point half way between the two, cross an open space fully an acre in extent, near one

of the streams of water which I have mentioned as being passed by the settlers in their pursuit.

The Shawanoe knew the place. It was in plain sight of the rock from which he had taken his observation the day before, and he promised to keep it under his eye, so that it was there the success of the project—if it was to be a success—would become manifest to their anxious friends.

It was agreed that immediately on the departure of The Serpent, Deerfoot and his companions should set out over the back trail, for their presence was likely to embarrass The Serpent, since the shot of the night before had made known to Ap-to-to that some of his enemies were lurking in the woods, and it would be almost impossible for the party to escape discovery, unless they placed a goodly distance between them and the Winnebagoes.

And so it was that The Serpent had been gone less than five minutes, when, with Deerfoot in the lead, the pioneers began threading their way through the woods, as if they had

given up hope, and were only seeking to return to the settlement.

It made no difference to the Shawanoe that there was scarcely any moonlight in the forest, for he seemed to be able to travel with unerring precision in the absence of all light. Behind him came the Moravian and the others, relying so fully upon his guidance that they walked with the certainty of midday.

It was a long tramp they had to take, and more than once Grubbens complained, but no one paid attention to him. The journey lasted till the night was far spent, when the rising ground and the appearance of rock, looming up in the dim moonlight, made known the welcome fact that for the present their task was ended.

Wearied and worn out, every one, including Deerfoot, threw himself upon the ground and slept.

The slumber, however, did not last long, for there was such a weight on the mind of each that he awoke at the moment it began growing light in the east. Those who had been thoughtful enough to bring food divided with

the others, who had but little appetite, excepting Grubbens. Rough, hardened men though they were, and inured to all manner of exposure, they were nervous over the certainty that the fate of three of their dear friends would soon be settled, if indeed it had not already been settled beyond change.

Deerfoot sprang upon the rock so as to keep his eye on the open space where the captives would appear, if they ever appeared at all. He would not allow any with him, but permitted them to crouch in the undergrowth near, and he promised to make known whatever he saw or learned.

No pen can picture the torturing anxiety of the hour that followed. Poor Fred Linden did not once speak. He was pale and absolutely ill, and Terry Clark was hardly any better. He ventured on an encouraging word or two, but he was in no mood to attempt any of the waggery that might have cheered his companions under less terrible circumstances. The others held their peace, for it may be said that it was no time for words. The missionary frequently closed his eyes, and the movement

of his lips showed that he was praying with all the fervor of his nature.

Suddenly all were thrilled by the words of Deerfoot :

"The Snake is coming—there is The Serpent—he walks alone—now he stops—there come the captives—one—two—three—all of them, but they have two other warriors with them."

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"They are coming—one—two—in all of them."

(Page 332.)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"ROLLING THUNDER DECIDED ON A PLAN WHICH WAS IN ACCORD WITH HIS VENOMOUS NATURE."

IT may be doubted whether any one with less audacity than The Serpent would have been able to effect a start with the three captives from the camp of the Winnebagoes.

Before the sun appeared above the horizon, he went to Ap-to-to, who was sleeping soundly in his blanket, and told him that he was ready to take the prisoners to his own camp. The Serpent expected opposition and he was not disappointed.

Having passed a night as war chief of the Winnebagoes, Ap-to-to felt more secure in the position than he did a few hours before. He said it would be unfair to place all the captives in charge of The Serpent, even though he asked that it should be only till nightfall.

In reply, The Serpent said in substance that that phase of the question was "not before the house," inasmuch as he held the promise of Ap-to-to and the permission had already been given.

Ap-to-to now remarked that the shot of the night before showed that their enemies were abroad, and that it would be unsafe to intrust the captives beyond the guardianship of the war party. The Serpent quieted this fear by saying that if the chief had been where he ought to have been the day before, instead of hiding among the hills, he would have seen that a half dozen Winnebagoes could beat off all the Long Knives that dared to attack them.

Ap-to-to winced under this stroke, but a harder one was struck when The Serpent gave Ap-to-to to understand that if he dared to refuse him he would tell the whole truth and have him deposed from his position. He then turned as if to walk off in disgust, but, as he had anticipated, the chief called him back with the assurance that he was at liberty to depart at once, either with or without an escort.

The Serpent suppressed his exultation over his success, but he must have had a thrill pass through him, as it does through any one who has won a coveted triumph. He had gained permission not only to depart with the captives but to do so without any warriors to embarrass his plans.

But an opposition quickly appeared which made it unsafe, even for such a popular brave as The Serpent, to carry out his desires. Hearing the opinion expressed that he meant to have the enjoyment of massacring the prisoners to himself, The Serpent assured them that no such thought was in his head.

This was sufficient, for the word of an Indian given under such circumstances is sacred. When two of the bravest warriors said that they would go along to make sure that The Serpent did not forget his promise he was too prudent to object. He said that if the two were afraid of the one man and squaws they could take more ; but they did not do so.

Linden and his wife and daughter had passed a most wretched night. The husband sat on the ground with his head on the log

behind him, while Edith held the head of her mother in her lap. They slept now and then, for they were worn out, but they were in such a feverish state that the slumber did them little if any good.

"Oh, there is that Indian again!" whispered the young lady, raising the head of her mother.

The father, who just then was nodding in a half doze, opened his eyes and saw The Serpent standing in front of them, while just behind were two other warriors. All three were looking steadily at the captives, who naturally enough were startled.

You know The Serpent could not speak a word of English, but one of his companions had a slight knowledge of the language. He motioned for the prisoners to rise, saying as he did so:

"Up-up-git!"

"That is an order for us to rise," said Linden, obeying the command, as did his wife and daughter with muttered expressions of wonder as to what was coming next.

"Can it be they're going to kill us?" said Mrs. Linden, showing not the least tremor in her voice.

"No; not that," replied her husband, half doubting his own words: "You remember that Ap-to-to, the new chief, said that they would wait till we reached their villages."

"But they may have changed their mind," suggested Edith, who not unnaturally was in a state of great trepidation.

"I think not, but we shall soon know."

The three stood side by side, ready for whatever might come so that it did not separate them from one another.

"Come," added the warrior who had acted as spokesman, leading the way across the open space, while The Serpent and the other Indian brought up the rear. By this time most of the sleeping red men had aroused themselves. They looked at the strange procession with a drowsy interest which did not rise to the interest of asking any questions.

Just beyond the edge of the open space

The Serpent, as if to let it be known he was master, ordered the warrior at the head to come to the rear, the commander, as he may be called, changing places with him.

The procession was of necessity an Indian one, The Serpent being in advance, Mr. Linden, his wife, daughter and each of the two warriors following in single file. This rendered traveling through the woods easier than if they kept beside each other.

You will remember that in his speech in favor of Ap-to-to's election to the presidency, The Serpent mentioned Rolling Thunder by name. This Indian was a lithe, active fellow, but one of the most treacherous wretches that ever lived. He was a devoted supporter of Ap-to-to and a hater of The Serpent, because he recognized in him his superior in every respect. It may have been that because, like the new chieftain, he was so unworthy himself, he could not be convinced that such a thing as honor existed in any one else.

Rolling Thunder was the warrior who addressed the captives in his broken fashion, and commanded them to rise from the log

and follow him; and he it was whom The Serpent compelled to change places with him after the journey began.

Now it could not have been possible that Rolling Thunder had any suspicion of the actual part The Serpent was playing, since that was so exceptional in every respect that not even Deerfoot would have divined it without explanation, but the events which followed proved that he was convinced that something was on foot altogether different from that which Ap-to-to and the other Winnebagoes suspected.

The first well-defined suspicion came just before reaching the open space where the watchful Deerfoot caught sight of the party. It then became apparent to Rolling Thunder that their leader was not following a direct course to his own encampment whose location was shown by a thin column of smoke, clearly discernible to the trained eye, against the bright morning sky.

By this time Rolling Thunder was convinced that their leader was aiming for some other point than his own camp. He must

have believed that his purpose was to massacre the three, as he had been accused of wishing to do.

Rolling Thunder had the choice of several schemes for defeating The Serpent. He could have taken his companion into his confidence and united with him to prevent the success of the other's plan, for it is reasonable to suppose that two warriors walking at the rear of a third could easily overmaster him.

Undoubtedly the best course was to slip away and bring help to checkmate The Serpent. The latter was not seen to look around a single time, and would not be likely to notice the absence of one of his warriors, or, if he did, would not be apt to lay it to the true cause.

But instead of trying something of this kind, Rolling Thunder decided on a plan which was in accord with his venomous nature.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"HE CAN CHANGE ALL HEARTS."

ROLLING THUNDER waited until he saw that the warrior near him had noticed that they were not approaching the camp, when he said in a voice which no one else could hear:

"The Serpent is a traitor; he is not taking the captives where he promised Ap-to-to to take them."

"My brother speaks the truth."

"All traitors shall die."

"My brother is right," assented the other, who seemed to hold Rolling Thunder in great fear.

That was all the warrant the Indian wanted. Stealthily drawing his knife, he set out to carry his threat into execution.

Meanwhile it was impossible that George Linden and his relatives should have any idea

of the part they were playing until the tragedy developed itself. The course they followed might have been reversed without any suspicion of the fact on the part of one of the three.

One advantage to our friends in the presence of the escort was the fact that none of them was bound. Had The Serpent started without companions he would have been compelled, from the force of circumstances, to secure the arms of all three of the prisoners. True he could have soon freed them, but it was better as it was.

Gradually the belief fastened itself upon George Linden that the explanation of this singular move was that they were to be taken to some secluded spot and put to death. This was not in accord with the threat of Ap-to-to made the day before, but that was no argument against it, for deceit is one of the cardinal virtues of the American Indian.

The pioneer grimly resolved that when the last struggle should come, he would make a brave fight, not so much for his own life as for his beloved ones. Although he had no weap-

ons except such as nature furnished, yet he knew how to use them and was active and strong. He could not expect to prevail against three armed warriors, but they were sure to find him any thing but an unresisting victim.

"My gracious!" he often exclaimed in after years, in relating his strange experience, "could I have known that that Indian just ahead of us, and whose equal I never saw except in the case of Deerfoot, was our devoted friend, what a load would have been lifted from my heart! But I would as soon have looked for friendship on the part of a spitting cat o' mountain."

Suddenly Rolling Thunder drew his knife from his girdle and began gliding around the three captives, so as to reach The Serpent and strike him in the back. The other Indian had agreed that the leader was a traitor and ought to die, and the miscreant was resolved to destroy him.

Edith Linden heard no noise, but was startled almost out of her senses by seeing the crouching Indian move noiselessly and swiftly

past her elbow, with his knife tightly grasped and his gaze fixed on some one in front. Naturally she believed he meant to strike her father, and uttered a scream which saved The Serpent's life.

He turned like a flash and saw Rolling Thunder with face aflame in the act of leaping upon him. The Serpent had no thought of any thing of the kind, so that, as I have said, the outcry of the maiden gave him warning in the nick of time.

The Serpent whipped out his knife with lightning-like quickness, and, instead of awaiting the advance of Rolling Thunder, bounded forward to meet him. The struggle was as short as it was terrific, and it is hardly necessary that I should tell you how it ended. The Serpent did not receive a scratch, while Rolling Thunder went down before him like a rotten oak in a hurricane.

All this was unaccountable to Linden and his relatives, who stared in a dazed way at the frightful scene; but that which followed was still more inexplicable to them.

Stooping over the prostrate body, The Ser-

pent took the knife from the nerveless hand, picked up the rifle from where Rolling Thunder had flung it aside when he slipped forward to make the attack, and handed both to Linden! Not only that, but the bullet-pouch and powder-horn were passed to him.

"I took them," said the pioneer, when telling the story to his children, "like one in a dream, wondering whether the whole thing was not a ghastly farce, of which I was to be the victim. A curious thrill stirred me when my hands closed about the gun, for I realized that not only was the number of our enemies reduced, but I was armed myself. That made one against two, and I felt for the first time a genuine hope of saving myself and dear ones. But lo! when I looked around, I beheld instead of two, only one Indian, and he was the warrior that had just handed me the weapons!"

Such was the fact, for the third Winnebago believed that discretion was the better part of valor. He knew that one of the combatants was sure to succumb in the fierce struggle, and he did not doubt his identity. Since The Serpent seemed to be on the rampage, he decided

that the best place for him was somewhere else.

The Winnebago was as much astonished as was Linden when he discovered that the other had departed. Doubtless he meant to hasten back to Ap-to-to or to the nearest camp, and make known what had taken place. This threatened a serious complication, for, though it would consume some time to bring other Winnebagoes to the spot, yet the distance necessary to pass before reaching the settlement was so great that, burdened as were the fugitives with ladies, they were almost certain to be overtaken before arriving at Greville.

Indeed, The Serpent was so disturbed by the situation that he was on the point of starting in pursuit of the warrior, who could not have gone far, when fortunately the necessity for doing so was saved him.

The moment Deerfoot from the elevated rock recognized The Serpent and the fugitives, he told his companions to wait where they were and then dashed through the woods at his highest speed. This was in accord with the

plan he and the Winnebago had agreed upon. The latter wished the Shawanoe to join him without delay, for he felt the need of his help. The Serpent counted upon trouble with his two warriors, but he was confident that with the Shawanoe's aid they could easily be disposed of.

Deerfoot was within a few rods of the strange scene, when he saw the warrior dashing through the undergrowth and among the trees as if for life. Knowing what it meant, the Shawanoe leaped forward and was at his heels within a few seconds.

"Stop!" he said. in the Winnebago tongue, "and no harm shall come to you."

The fugitive would not halt, and Deerfoot tripped him with such violence that his gun flew from his hands. Before he could rise, Deerfoot's own weapon was pointed at him.

"Let the Winnebago be still and he shall not be hurt," commanded the Shawanoe, clearly implying what would follow if he was not obeyed.

This threat brought the terrified warrior to his senses, and he not only stood still but

asked in turn: "What does the Shawanoe want with the Winnebago?"

"Walk to where The Serpent is waiting."

"He will take the scalp of the Winnebago."

"He will not; Deerfoot will save the Winnebago."

At the same time Deerfoot handed the rifle to its owner, who must have felt in as peculiar a frame of mind as did George Linden before learning the whole truth. He could not fail to see, however, that the wiser course was to obey the young Shawanoe, who was clearly his master, and who, therefore, was able to punish any disobedience on his part.

So the Winnebago walked slowly back in front of the Shawanoe, and it was The Serpent's turn to be astonished when the two came in sight.

"Why did the dog of a Winnebago flee?" asked The Serpent, advancing threateningly upon the warrior.

"The wrath of The Serpent consumes every thing before it," was the reply of the terrified Indian; "the brother of The Serpent was frightened and fled."

It is doubtful whether The Serpent in his anger would have accepted this explanation, which undoubtedly was the true one, but for the interference of Deerfoot, whose sense of right and wrong was much clearer than that of the Winnebago, even though the latter had started on the true path.

"Let not my brother The Serpent harm the warrior who meant no evil," said the Shawanoe, raising his hand to emphasize his protest.

The Serpent slowly pushed his knife behind his girdle, though the scowl on his face showed that he would have preferred to bury it in the chest of the cringing red man and have him out of the way once and for all.

Turning to the dazed Linden, Deerfoot pointed to the leader and said: "The Serpent is the friend of the pale-faces."

"Well, by gracious!" exclaimed the pioneer, "I'm glad to learn that, for I was beginning to believe that my senses had left me altogether from the way things looked. But, if I ain't mistaken, he is one of the band that burst in our door yesterday."

"He was the leader," was the quiet remark of Deerfoot.

"What then has wrought such a wondrous change in him?"

"The Great Spirit," replied the Shawano, looking reverently upward; "*He* can change all hearts."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed Mrs. Linden, awed by the strange declaration and glancing at The Serpent, whose pose was that of the ideal Indian warrior; "it seems incredible."

"Nevertheless it is true, for Deerfoot has not only said it, but the actions of the Winnibago whom he calls The Serpent, prove it."

"Yes," said Edith, "I can now understand his conduct, which puzzled us so greatly last night; then we must be saved!" she added in a tremulous voice, while her rosy face flushed with the radiance of hope.

"Well, we are in much better form than we were yesterday," declared the joyous parents, "but we're not out of the woods yet, are we Deerfoot?"

"Not yet," was the significant reply of the Shawano.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"ALAS, HE WAS RIGHT."

BOTH The Serpent and Deerfoot knew too well the value of time to allow any of the minutes to be squandered. The recaptured Winnebago was no more than fairly back in place, as may be said, when the Shawanoe took the lead on the return, saying as he did so:

"There must be no delay; we have a long distance to go before we are safe from the red men."

Linden and his wife and daughter hastened forward, The Serpent bringing up the rear with his brother warrior in front of him where the fellow was under his eye. Strange thoughts must have come to this brave when he saw the foremost fighter of his tribe deliberately turn the captives over to the charge of their friend

and the most implacable enemy of the Winnebagoes.

You will remember that in dashing from the rock to join The Serpent, Deerfoot gave no heed to the Moravian, and his friends whom he left behind. The distance was considerable and they decided that it was the Shawanoe's wish that they should wait for him. Accordingly, they kept their places for the time, though Fred Linden's impatience was shared in a less degree by the others.

Deerfoot felt that the safety of the captives demanded that there should not be a minute unnecessary delay. The most direct route to the settlement was taken and he struck a game which compelled Edith and her mother to do their best to keep up with him.

The Shawanoe's decision to make haste to his first object led him to take a course considerably to the right of the rock where his friends were awaiting him. In doing so he was able to use the path made by wild animals in going to and from the stream of water. This was a great help, since it was traveled so much more easily.

There was no need of the settlers accompanying the captives over this route, but, when at the nearest point, Deerfoot meant to signal to them to join him, since it would be cruel to delay the meeting of Fred Linden and his family.

The speed at which the party were going quickly took them to the point, when the Shawanoe sent a ringing whoop through the woods that he knew would thrill the hearts of the waiting son and friends.

The keen-eared Indian recognized the answering signal as that of Fred Linden himself, who came bounding among the trees with a heart so light that he seemed to be racing through mid air. With him was Terry Clark, who would have overflowed with waggery had not his companion kept him running so hard that he was not able to say any thing, except to protest now and then against so much haste.

Deerfoot showed his face so as to give the youths time to come up. He had hardly done so when he and The Serpent heard the discharge of several rifles somewhat to

the left, but not in the direction of the road from which he had taken his observation.

Both the Indians were surprised, for the firing was totally unexpected by them. The two parties stopped abruptly and looked in each other's faces, at a loss to explain the meaning of the firing.

A close observer of the Shawanoe would have seen that not only was he astonished but alarmed, for the reports of the guns were from the direction of his own home, whose nearness to the route of the Winnebagoes had caused him no little uneasiness.

The only explanation of the shots was that the settlers had come in collision with some of the Winnebagoes, though it must have been pure chance that took the red men in that direction.

But the solicitude of Deerfoot did not allow him to stay away from his cabin where danger threatened. He told The Serpent to hurry toward the settlement, promising to rejoin him if he could, though it was not likely that would be necessary, since his presence would add to the speed of the fugitives.

He had scarcely gone fifty paces when he came face to face with Fred Linden and Terry Clark.

"O Deerfoot!" gasped the white-faced youth; "where are they?"

The warrior pointed behind him and said: "All are there: father, mother and sister!"

"Heaven be thanked!" exclaimed the happy fellow, bursting like a frightened deer among the trees and undergrowth.

"What means the firing of those guns?" asked Deerfoot of the panting Terry Clark, at the instant he made a break to follow his half wild friend.

"I'm thinkin' it's 'cause some one pulled the thriggers, as me grandmither on me uncle's side ——"

But Terry's foot became entangled in one of the running vines at that moment, and he went down with such emphasis that all utterance was cut off. Deerfoot did not wait to question him further, but was away with the speed of the wind.

No more shots were heard from the direction

of the first, but this fact did not remove the misgiving that alarmed the Shawanoe.

He remembered that by his directions his wife, who bore the sweet name of Naomi, had taken their little boy Paul and gone into the woods, where she was to stay until the danger of discovery was over. Her fine woodcraft made this an easy task for her, and she had proven her ability so many times in this respect that Deerfoot felt no uneasiness during his long absences in the service of the whites.

Since the Winnebagoes went beyond the neighborhood of her habitation the evening before, Naomi was naturally warranted in believing that the peril had gone by. She was likely, therefore, to return to her home which was indeed the dearest spot on earth to her. It was this fact that startled Deerfoot the moment he heard the reports of the guns.

I may as well pause here long enough to say that Fred Linden and Terry Clark joined the fugitives a few minutes after meeting Deerfoot. The reunion was a most joyful one,

despite the impatience of The Serpent he was compelled to wait some time before they recovered to the extent that they could resume their journey to the settlement, which they safely reached a few hours later.

Meanwhile Deerfoot was hurrying through the forest, agitated to an unusual degree, for the conviction was strong upon him that something terrible had happened. Alas, he was right.

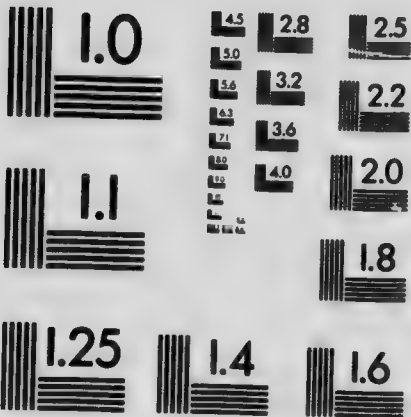
The Moravian, believing that it was the Shawance's wish that he and his companions should await his coming near the rock from which he had taken his observation, refused permission to the rest to move out to meet the party. The anxiety of Fred Linden, however, overcame his scruples, and, unseen by the good man, who, having no thought that any one would disobey him, was less watchful than he should have been, he stole away, closely followed by Terry, whose agitation was hardly less than that of his comrade.

Thus it came about that at the moment Deerfoot gave the signal for his friends to join him



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and The Serpent, the two youths were already well on the road, and the rest would have speedily followed but for an unexpected and tragical occurrence.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

"HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL."

FROM his position on the rock, where he was keeping a careful look-out, Mr. Griffiths the Moravian missionary discovered two Winnebago warriors moving through the wood, as though unsuspicious that any one else was near. Their course was a little to the east of a route that led to the camp of Ap-to-to, though where they had come from and what was the meaning of their presence in that section was beyond the power of the Moravian or any of his companions to guess.

Bowlby and Hardin believed they belonged to a squad, as they may be called, which threatened the safety of the returning captives. The Moravian agreed with them, concluding that by some unaccountable means the Winnebago chieftain had learned of the plan for the rescue and had sent a strong party to the rear to head off the fugitives.

Had the pioneers been given a few minutes in which to discuss the question, they would have decided that this was impossible, but the situation demanded prompt action, and they set out after the warriors, who, immediately discovering them, fired their guns and broke into a run.

The speed of the respective parties was about the same, and the Indians, finding themselves hard pressed, turned sharply to one side and took refuge, or rather tried to take refuge in a small cabin which they evidently believed to be deserted.

The two warriors were on the point of bursting in the door, when it was opened from within and Naomi, the wife of Deerfoot, with little Paul in her arms, issued forth. The meeting was purely accidental, but the two parties were for a second or two necessarily thrown together.

At this moment every one of the settlers excepting the Moravian, let fly at the Winnabagoes, hoping to bring them down before they could reach the shelter of the cabin.

The result was awful. Both warriors and

the squaw and her child fell to the earth as if smitten by a lightning bolt.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the horrified missionary, who being several paces in advance of the rest, did not see the general bringing up of their rifles. "What have you done?"

"We've sent them two varmints under," replied Bowlby, unaware of the full result of the volley.

"Yes, and you have killed the wife and child of Deerfoot!"

The terrible deed was done beyond recall.

There was not one of the company of pioneers who would not have given his right arm or his eye could it have been undone.

"Why did we not see her?" wailed Bowlby, walking a few steps; and then, stopping short of the inanimate bodies, he dropped his rifle to the ground, covered his bearded face with his hands and sobbed as if his heart was breaking.

Every one, even Hank Grubbens, did the same, while the Moravian, as white as death, stepped softly forward, and, stooping down,

examined the body of the mother and the child, hoping that there might be some life left, but there was none. The cruel bullets had done their work effectively.

"Poor Deerfoot!" murmured the good man, "this will break his heart!"

"Are they dead?" asked Hardin, who being the first to recover from the shock came timidly forward.

"Yes, not a spark of life remains. It is perhaps, as well as it is, but my heart bled for Deerfoot."

"It *is* rough," added Grubbens, "and though me and him had some words, they didn't amount to nothin', and I would take the bullets that killed them into my own breast, if it would do them any good. The worst of it is that none of us knows which one fired the shots that done it."

"I'm mighty glad that's so," said Bowlby, "for as we can't be sartin which missed, we can't be sartin either which hit. We all aimed at the varmints, not noticing the woman that got mixed up with 'em that minute. I s'pose Deerfoot will soon be here. By gracious!

can't stand it," added the hunter, catching up his gun from where he had thrown it on the ground ; "I'm goin' to leave."

The dread of witnessing the grief of the stricken warrior was so great on the part of the pioneers that they eagerly followed the example of Bowlby. Their conduct had the savor of cowardice, but, after all, it was as well, perhaps, that they left only the good man to be present when the blow fell upon the Shawanoe.

The Moravian uttered no objection to the wishes of his companions, who hurried away almost in a panic. Finding himself alone, he knelt by the body of the mother, which lay with her child clasped in her arms, both looking as if in a sweet sleep, and began praying to heaven.

The words were so low that his voice sounded like a gentle murmur, but never were words more fervent than those that came from the servant of the Most High.

"Not for these, O God," he pleaded, "do I offer up supplication to Thee, for they are with Thee and all is well with them, but for

him, the husband and the father. He has been Thy servant for years, and has walked humbly and reverently in Thy sight. - For some wise reason of Thine own, Thou hast permitted this blow to fall upon his head, and now I beseech Thee, Heavenly Father, give Deerfoot strength to bear the heaviest burden that has ever been laid upon his shoulders——”

A groan checked the gentle words of the Moravian. Opening his eyes and glancing to his side, he saw Deerfoot.

The poor warrior, hurrying with all speed through the woods, his heart oppressed by the misgiving that something was amiss, first caught sight of the Moravian on his knees in prayer. Next he saw the forms of the two Winnebagoes, and then those of his wife and child.

Staggering forward, he reached a tree near the missionary, when his weakness became such that his rifle fell to the ground, and he grasped a limb to save himself from falling. Hearing the moan, the Moravian sprang to his feet and caught the young warrior just as

he fainted, the first time in his life that he succumbed to such weakness from simple emotion itself.

"My poor son! my poor son!" murmured the missionary, gently letting him down to the ground with his head against the tree; "I would have died to save you this."

Deerfoot's superb vitality quickly brought back his fluttering senses. Sitting motionless he stared in the face of the missionary with a dreamy, far-away expression. Then he slowly moved his head and looked at the forms of his wife and little boy so yearningly, so woefully, so despairingly, that the Moravian raised up his hand and gently moved his head back so as to face himself again.

"Don't, Deerfoot, it can do no good!"

"Are they *both* dead?" asked the Shawnee faintly and slowly.

The missionary inclined his head by way of answer.

Deerfoot continued staring at his friend with that dreamy, absent expression which indicated a dazed condition of mind. Then, brightening somewhat, and with something

like a flash of his fine black eyes, he glanced at the inanimate figures of the two warriors.

The Moravian saw that he supposed they were the ones who had slain his wife and little boy, and that a thrill of the old warrior stirred within him when he saw that they had paid the penalty.

The good man parted his lips to tell him the truth, how the shots that had laid his loved ones low were fired by their own friends, though intended for others; but he checked himself.

"There is no need of his knowing the truth now," he concluded; "he will learn it some day, and then it will be sad enough to know that his awful affliction came from the hands of those who loved him."

Deerfoot did not try to change his posture, but sat with his back against the tree, and his eyes fixed on the pitying countenance of the venerable missionary.

"My heart bleeds for you, my son," said the Moravian in those soft, sympathetic tones that had smoothed the pillow of many a dying mortal, "but nothing can avail now. God

will sustain you, if you but put your trust in Him."

The hungering expression on the face of Deerfoot encouraged the Moravian to continue his attempt to lift the crushing weight from his heart.

"My son, you have been a true follower of the meek and lowly Saviour. He has been very kind to you; He gave you gifts which He has denied to most of your race. You have been able to read His Word and to draw comfort from it, when others have not found the same consolation.

"Deerfoot, He will not desert you now. I know it sounds cruel to say, while you are writhing under this blow, that He has chastened you for some wise purpose of His own, but so it is. I beg you to rouse yourself, to try to live closer to Him, and to bear your burden like a true Christian. His own beloved Son was nailed to the cross and suffered death for you and me. He lingered for days and nights before His spirit left His tortured body, but Naomi and little Paul passed from this life to the other so quickly that they could not

have drawn more than one breath of pain. The shots which our friends fired were aimed at the Winnebagoes, and struck your dear ones by mistake ; so cruel was the error that they will never get over the sorrow ——”

The good man noticed the quick, inquiring expression that flashed over the countenance of the Shawanoe. He bent forward just enough to draw his head away from the trunk of the tree that was supporting it, and gasped the single exclamation :

“ *What !* ”

The Moravian had forgotten himself, and revealed the true cause of the death of his dear ones. He saw his mistake, but it was too late to correct it, and, after all, it could make no difference, since the blow had fallen.

“ Yes,” gently added the good man, “ the men wept over their awful mistake, and were unable to stay and witness your grief. I am sure you bear them no ill will ! ”

Deerfoot's head swayed slowly from side to side. At that moment there was no thought of resentment in his heart. He knew it was an accident, but oh, what a cruel one !

"At the most, Deerfoot, we have but a few years to live. Naomi and Paul have gone on ahead of you, but they will wait for you above and you shall soon be reunited with them to part no more forever."

"Can not Deerfoot go *now*?" asked the Shawanoe with such a strange wistful expression that the heart of the Moravian almost stood still.

"In His own good time ; he doeth all things well ; wait with patience and your reward is sure."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"DEERFOOT DIES FOR THE WHITE MAN."

RALLYING slightly from the dreadful shock, the left hand of Deerfoot began groping in the folds of his hunting-shirt. The Moravian did not catch the meaning of the movement, which was so weak that he was anxious to give him help.

But, while wondering how it should be done he saw its meaning. The hand rested upon the small Bible, which he drew forth, and, reaching it toward the good man, said :

"Read, father, for Deerfoot !"

The missionary took the sacred volume and noticed a passage, which, judging from the thumb marks, was a favorite of the Shawanoe. In a low, solemn, impressive monotone, he read :

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multi-

tude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ;

"And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God,

"Saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Therefore are they before the throne of

God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“ For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

The Moravian had reached the end of the beautiful chapter, and he glanced at Deerfoot to see whether he wished him to continue.

He was startled by the appearance of the Shawanoe. There was a peculiar dilatation of the pupils, an ashy hue under the rich, dusky skin, and a ghastly appearance that he had seen only on the countenance of dying persons. It was indeed the shadow of death.

“ Deerfoot ! ” said the missionary, laying his hand on his shoulder, “ rouse yourself ! ”

“ God is good,” he said faintly, the sweet shadowy smile lighting up his face for the last time. “ He is going to take Deerfoot to

Naomi and his little Paul—Deerfoot dies for the white man—good-by !”

With his last flicker of strength he reached out his hand, which was grasped by the sorrowing Moravian. Again the lips moved, and the good man could distinguish only the whispers, “*Paul, Naomi.*”

Bending his head, he kissed the lips as tenderly as if they had been those of his dying wife. Then drawing back, he became aware that the hand which he held in his own was lifeless. Looking again into the countenance before him, he saw that Deerfoot the Shawanoe was dead !

“Died of a broken heart, and, as he truly said, for the white man,” murmured the Moravian, still holding the small, shapely hand in his own.

The Moravian would not leave the sacred spot, through fear that the remains of the loved ones might suffer disturbance. The settlers, who had fled in order to avoid witnessing Deerfoot’s grief, felt that the act was

too much like a desertion, and they returned that afternoon.

By that time it was learned that the Winnebagoes, finding that the captives had escaped beyond recovery, made no attempt to retake them, but devoted their energies to securing The Serpent, who had played them one of the most audacious tricks ever known. They would have given a dozen warriors for him.

But they never laid hands on the daring warrior. He remained in the settlement for some weeks, but he was so discontented that he finally bade the pioneers good-by, assuring the Moravian that he would strive for the rest of his life to be as good a follower of the Great Spirit as Deerfoot had been. Then he left, but instead of going east or north, he faced the setting sun.

No one in the settlement ever saw him again, so that his final fate could only be conjectured. The general belief was that he affiliated with some of the tribes in the far West, where his prowess and skill as a warrior must have made him welcome.

Some years later rumors reached the missionary of an Indian stranger who had joined a tribe beyond the headwaters of the Mississippi, where he not only proved to be one of the most daring warriors, but he told the red man about the religion of the pale-faces which was preached by the missionaries.

There can be little doubt that this was The Serpent, though nothing positive was ever learned.

A large grave was dug near the cabin of Deerfoot, and in it were laid the remains of the Shawanoe, his wife and little boy. In that hour of affliction, an unwonted tenderness touched all hearts, and a decent burial was given to the two Winnebagoes who had fallen by the rifles of the pioneers.

For a couple of years nothing but a simple mound marked the last resting-place of Deerfoot and his family; but as the news of his death spread through the West and on both sides of the Mississippi, it was found that he had left scores and hundreds of mourning friends, who took steps to erect a suitable monument to his memory.

Fred Linden and many others joined in the work, and a beautiful pointed shaft of marble was placed over his grave. On one of the sides is the word "NAOMI," on another "PAUL," and on the other this inscription:

"DEERFOOT, THE FRIEND OF THE WHITE
MAN."

in the
marble
of the
another
ion :

WHITE